

You Should Be Scared of Me

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You Should Be Scared of Me

by [CastielFollowMe](#)

Summary

“Family isn’t always blood. It’s the people in your life who you want in theirs; the ones who accept you for who you are. The ones who would do anything to see you smile and who love you. No matter what.” –Unkown

Secrets are exposed on several members of the Voltron team, that no one ever knew about, but will these secrets make the team stronger or threaten to tear them apart? Especially when Keith is involved.

Notes

Come cry with me about Voltron and Keith on tumblr.
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See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Familiar with Villians in my Head

How can I face my worst nightmares?

How can face my worst nightmares, when it's my treasured desire?

x.x.V.x.x

"I have a simulation for you, paladins." Allura's voice was strong and slightly filled with more determination than usual. The strange look of *apprehension* caused Shiro to look up from where he had Lance into a headlock (where he had been for the past ten minutes), while Lance swatting at his arm unsuccessfully. Hunk barely glanced up from his bowl of, space goo, with a nervous frown and furrowed eyebrows. Pidge didn't even bother looking up from their computer, as they were already too used to Allura's ideas by now.

Even Keith was confused from where he was sprawled beside Pidge and cleaning the blade to his knife.

"What sort of simulation?" Keith asked slowly.

"Yeah, 'cause the last time you had a "simulation" for us, you tried to blow us up with the castle's defense system." Hunk added nervously. Shiro nodded. This was true.

"That was simply to motivate you paladins to form Voltrons and face Zarkon. It was just a bit of heated motivation." Allura waved off Hunk's concern with a determined gesture of her hands. Hunk huffed as he stuffed some more goo into her mouth.

"Actually, it was the food fight that helped us to form Voltron." Pidge spoke up without looking away from their computer.

"I'm positive it was just your little human minds finally cracking under all the training and pressure." Coran decided to add and twiddled his mustache. The Altean ignored the disgruntle protests that followed while Allura rolled her eyes.

"What sort of simulation did you have in mind?" Shiro asked, loosening his hold on Lance for a second, only to tighten it upon hearing Lance's bitter mumble of, "Of course dad's going to side with *mom*."

Lance desperately yielded.

"We are in the middle of a war and fleeing the Galra Empire, princess." Shiro reminded Allura with a frown. Tears gather in Lance's eyes.

He dropped like a sack of potatoes when Shiro finally released him.

"*Dios te salve, Maria...*" Lance began to wheeze under his breathe while secretly trying to maneuver away from Shiro, who's focus was now on Allura. Allura crossed her arms across her chest, awaiting everyone else's attention.

"Exactly. We have the *entire* Galra Empire after us. Along with Zarkon and *Haggar*." Shiro's heart thudded painfully at the mention of the witch and his throat tightened. In his mind, he could see images of her lingering over his immobile body with a grin that was too wide, with too many teeth. Her yellow eyes bore straight through him and into his soul as he continued to scream.

And scream. And scream.

Shiro managed to keep his attitude calm and collected, as he internally flinched at the sudden touch to his shoulder. Glancing back, he noticed Keith right next to him, wearing a look of concern on his face. A look that was not often found on Keith.

Not unless it was with someone he *loved* and cared about.

“Are you alright, Shiro?” Keith asked quietly, as to not alert anyone else in the room. Something which Shiro was slightly grateful for at the moment. He gave Keith a quick nod with a smile in hopes to ease the younger teen’s worry. Though Keith let the subject drop, he didn’t look entirely convince, nor did he drop his hand from Shiro’s shoulder.

“So, princess, what do you have planned for us? A grand feast? A night of dancing under the moonlit stars?” Lance’s voice broke through Shiro’s concentration and he resisted the urge to roll his eyes and fall into a permanent Dad Face of Disappointment.

“I wouldn’t want to go dancing, see as we’re flying at hundreds of miles an hour in the vacuum sealed vortex of space.” Keith deadpanned. Immediately, Lance squawked with a retort and soon the two were arguing over whether or not they could last outside in Space, long enough to dance. Occasionally Pidge would add in some sort of scientific fact that worked to in favor of both sides, in order to rally up the two *even further*.

Shiro was tired.

“It’s a simulation, that I hope will help us to become a stronger team and help to defeat Zarkon once and for all.” Allura’s smile slowly grew as she clasped her hands together. Shiro couldn’t help but admit that he was a little more than curious about this “simulation” that Allura had planned.

“How?” Hunk asked.

“I’m glad you asked.” Allura smiled before giving a slight wave of her hand and suddenly the resting area was turning into the training room. Shiro startled at the walls vibrating and disintegrating into the familiar walls of the training room. Pidge looked as if they were trying to track every little movement with their eyes, in order to store away for future use.

It was then that Keith noticed the line of robots, similar to the gladiator only simplified, lined up against the back wall. Noticing his rival was looking away, Lance immediately followed.

“*Robots? Más robots? ¿Cuántos más tienen?*” Lance muttered more to himself, once he caught sight of at least four different robots in the room with them. “Seriously, Allura. How many gladiators do you plan on fighting us?” Shiro’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

He had no problem with the training, nor the gladiators (after a year secluded on Galra ships becoming the titled “Champion,” nothing could phase him). But he knew everyone here besides Allura and Coran were just *kids*. He was the oldest at nineteen, and Pidge was the youngest at fifteen.

They were still kids.

And if there was one thing Shiro had learned from his time with the Galras and back on Earth was this: Forcing kids to fight and fight when they could not give anymore was never the answer. The team needed to learn and strategize and work as a *team* rather than constantly fight robots.

“Princess, with all due respect, I have to agree with Lance.”

“What? Really? Pidge are you recording this? Tell me someone has that taped? I wanna make it my ringtone.”

“Lance, you don’t even have a phone.”

“But I will. Just for this.”

“*Lance.*”

“They’re not gladiators.” Allura interrupted the group before another fight could break out. Hunk began to sweat nervously while Pidge huffed. “They’re similar – made from the same material and Altean technology. However, these are similar to an Altean’s body structure, more specifically our chameleon-like abilities.” Allura began to explain and with a wave of her hands, the robots eyes were glowing blue and suddenly they were brought back to life. Keith immediately drew his hand down towards the head of his knife, while Shiro took on a fighting stance.

Luckily, Lance, Hunk and Pidge were all also ready to fight if need be.

“They can change their body structures and shape completely just like I could when we infiltrated that Galra base.” Shiro shuddered to think of how close they had come to lose her – to losing everyone.

Lance shrieked when the robot closest to him suddenly morphed into...Lance?

The others were astounded and stood gawking at the exact replace of Lance, standing at a firm attention, while the *real* Lance shoved Keith’s body in between his robotic doppelganger. Keith blinked owlshly.

“Amazing. It even looks like real skin.” Pidge muttered, adjusting their glasses and taking a step closer to the Lance look-alike. Immediately, the robot turned its attention to Pidge and soon there was an exact replica of Pidge standing in front of them. Pidge waved their hand around and the doppelganger copied. “This is incredible!”

Shiro swallowed uneasily at the sight. “Princess...”

“Zarkon has a witch on his side. An extremely *powerful* witch too. She is able to manipulate and change her own body, to even extremes that even I cannot go to as an Altean.” Allura continued and her entire demeanor suddenly turned dark. “She could take the shape of any one of us or you paladins and take your place, without any of us every knowing.” Shiro’s metal arm clenched into a tight fist that surely would have hurt him if it had been a real fist. He mind was racing and he found that he could not stop thinking about the day they had last seen Zarkon and Haggar. The last time he had faced the witch, she was *wearing his own face*.

“She can even create illusions so real that you would never be able to tell; never be able to escape.” Allura continued as the other robots began to take shape of each of the paladins in the room. “She can take your greatest memory and turn it into your darkest nightmare. She can take your mind and show you a pain so unimaginable that you wish only for death, and she can do it by using your greatest weaknesses.”

The room fell into a heavy silence.

“You need to learn each other in every way that you can. You need to be able to tell if the Lance in front of you is him or an imposter.” Allura said, with eyes blazing brightly. Lance

swallowed thickly and Keith frowned. “You’re bonding and doing well but now you must know your teammates like the back of your hand. This is your new training exercise and this is one that you must perfect.”

This time everyone swallowed.

x.x.V.x.x

Lance was not usually a morning person, especially if you woke him up before his necessary *eight* hours of sleep. After that, he was actually quite pleasant to be around. Usually while Hunk cooked, he would chat about anything and everything, from missing his family to whether or not Coran has actually ever been *off* this ship.

Today was no different.

At least that’s what Lance thought.

He woke up refreshed and well rested, with a twinkle in his eye and a joy (*no Keith it was not a skip*) in his step. So far he had yet to have any encounters with Allura’s magical-shapeshifting robots and he planned to keep it that way. The alien had surprised everyone by causing the robots to vanish and claiming that the only way they could train is when they weren’t expecting them.

Lance did not like surprises. Unless it was his birthday and there was cake and presents involved.

Yawning, Lance entered the kitchen to find Hunk already seated and eating, with Pidge and Shiro at his side. Keith was sprawled on the couch behind them, as Lance could just see his boot (*seriously, who sleeps with their clothes and shoes on?*) over the couch. No doubt, Keith was probably still sleeping. On most days, Keith was up just as early as Shiro but every now and again the lack of sleep would catch up and he would sleep *anywhere* in the castle.

Shiro had scolded Lance the first time that Lance had tried to prank the heavy slumbering teen by attempting to take Keith’s own knife to his hair while he slept. Needless to say, Shiro put a ban on anyone pranking Keith while he slept.

“Good morning everybody. What’s the plan for today?” Lance yawned once more when he took a seat in between Shiro and Hunk. Pidge grunted tiredly but continued to eat their plate of food. Shiro smiled in greeting.

“Morning Lance. We’ll probably do some team flight sequences today. Otherwise, it’s your day to do whatever.” Shiro said before taking a mouthful of space goo. Lance’s mouth watered (*they must have been out here too long if that was appetizing to Lance*).

“No way! A day off?”

Shiro nodded and Lance whooped, causing Keith to grunt from the couch and Pidge to follow in pursuit. His grin never wavered when turned to the quiet Hunk before tapping him on the shoulder. Hunk turned around, mouth full of food, and blinked at Lance.

“Hear that buddy, what do you and I say we catch some rays outside today?” Hunk swallowed thickly with an excited nod.

“Sure, sure.”

Lance whooped once more and this time he narrowly avoided a pillow being thrown at him. Rather than shout at Keith, Lance simply grinned, unable to keep his mood from dampening. He looked over at Hunk, who had tapped his shoulder. Lance frowned immediately when he noticed a plate of space goo being offered to him, specifically *Hunk's plate*.

"Huh?"

"You're probably hungry. Have my plate."

Lance's eyes narrowed his the hairs on his neck stood up. "You're offering me food? *Your food?*" Hunk frowned in confusion and by now Shiro and Pidge were both alert and staring between Lance and Hunk. Shiro's eyes narrowed and he lowered his hand that was beginning to glow purple. Lance's nose crinkled from how deep he was frowning.

"You're not Hunk."

Hunk's jaw dropped. "What?!"

"You heard me. Hunk would *never, ever* offer me his own plate of food. That's for him and him alone." Lance bit back slowly. "He would have made another plate for me." Lance's eyes narrowed and Shiro was up and out of his seat when Hunk's own eyes narrowed.

Lance barely had a second before Hunk's eyes glowed a bright blue and the larger teen was reaching out to grab Lance by his neck. Shiro was quick to flip over the breakfast table, after Pidge had jumped over the couch, while Lance jumped out of robot Hunk's reach. Lance jerked to the side when robot Hunk moved to kick Lance across the room. He screeched and ducked under the fallen table while Shiro shouted for him.

Lance could feel his adrenaline pumping and his heart was racing. Even though he knew this wasn't Hunk there was still something unnerving, *unnatural* about fighting his best friend. Quickly, Lance's eyes scanned under the table and soon his eyes caught sight of an abandoned pile of plates. Just as he grabbed the pile he could hear robot Hunk's footsteps approaching him (*it was now or never*).

With a newfound speed, Lance popped up and over the fallen table and began to fling the plates in his hand like Frisbees, straight at robot Hunk. The robot attempted to block the plates as they smashed against it, but it was defenseless and when one plate smashed against its neck the robots eyes dimmed and soon robot Hunk was replaced by a powered off robot.

Everyone remained frozen in their positions around the kitchen.

"Excellent work Lance!" Allura clapped happily as she entered the room and soon enough the robot had vanished from everyone's sight. "You are the first to have been successful."

Lance's look a terror was soon replaced by a smug look.

x.x.V.x.x

"Pidge, do you want to train for a bit?" Pidge looked up when they heard Shiro entering the room. Their glasses slid from their nose and they huffed as they pushed them back up. Shiro smiled softly.

"Is everyone busy again?" Pidge asked, causing Shiro to chuckle.

"Lance and Keith are sparing and Coran managed to wrangle a disgruntle Hunk into

helping him clean the kitchen.” Shiro nodded and took a seat beside Pidge. Pidge snorted. “He’s probably only there to sneak food every now and again.”

“Sounds like Hunk.” Pidge agreed with a soft smile.

“So what do you say? Wanna train?” Shiro asked again and Pidge blinked.

“Do you mean like, spar?” It was unusual and more often than not Pidge spared one-on-one with Shiro and sometimes with Keith. Shiro had taken to trying to teach the smallest member of their group to be able to fight with their own hands, should it ever come to that.

“Yeah. It’s been a while.” True. The last sparing session they had with Shiro had been about a couple of weeks ago, but Pidge had usually tried their hardest to avoid any type of confrontation and sparing, especially with someone as good as Shiro. It was only a mockery at how bad he made Pidge look.

“Uh, not today Shiro. I think I’m good.” Pidge shook their head and was about to turn their attention back to their computer when they noticed Shiro’s frown. “Shiro?”

“Pidge, c’mon. Don’t you want to spar?” Shiro asked again and this time Pidge also frowned in confusion. They shook their head and moved their hands away from their computer. “Don’t you want to get better, like the rest of the team?”

Pidge’s heart thudded and they swallowed thickly. *That had hurt.*

Shiro took notice of Pidge’s expression and his own expression softened. “Pidge, I just want to know that you’ll be able to protect yourself. That you’ll be safe without us.” Shiro said softly. Pidge avoided direct eye contact.

“I can take care of myself Shiro. You’ve seen me fight, so don’t worry okay?” Pidge attempted to drop the conversation with the tone in their voice. For a while, Shiro was quiet.

“You can, but that’s not enough Pidge. *I’m* not enough to take on Galra soldiers, to take on Zarkon!” Pidge jumped at the sudden increase in volume with Shiro’s voice. Their eyes widened at the angered and helpless look on Shiro’s face.

“That’s why we have Voltron Shiro.” Pidge bit back, feeling their own anger rising. “None of us can fight Zarkon one-on-one and one training session isn’t going to stop that.” Shiro growled at this and Pidge’s eyes widened.

“You need to get stronger Pidge. We *all* need to get stronger.” At this statement, Pidge noticed that Shiro’s arm was beginning to glow and their eyes widened even further.

“You’re not Shiro.” Pidge said lowly, eyes narrowed. The robot Shiro merely snarled without responding. Within a second, Shiro lunged at Pidge, who nearly avoided getting burned by the robotic Shiro’s hand. Pidge knew deep in their heart that they were no match for *their* Shiro, let alone a robotic and enhanced version of Shiro, but that didn’t mean that they could just give up.

Pidge avoided another attack from Shiro’s hand crawled away from the enraged robot. They yelped when robot Shiro’s hand smashed through the floor. However, their eyes lingered on the abandoned cable lying around robot Shiro’s feet. With a burst of determination and anticipation, Pidge slid across the floor (they would have to thank Keith for those lessons) between robot Shiro’s legs and snatched up the cables before wrapping them tightly around the robot’s ankles. With a harsh tug from Pidge, the robot came tumbling down and quickly Pidge was on robot Shiro before slamming their laptop against the robot’s face.

Instantly, the robots eyes dimmed and the layer of Shiro disappeared before all Pidge was sitting on was a regular white robot.

They blinked when suddenly Shiro came running into the room. Shiro's fist was clenched and his eyes were wide.

"You owe me a new laptop." Was all Pidge said.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro noticed when Lance hadn't made a single annoying comment all day. All he really had to do was tap the robot and robot Lance was gone.

The real Lance was offended it had taken a whole day for Shiro to figure it out.

Shiro's head hurt.

x.x.V.x.x

Hunk walked into a room with two Keiths.

He walked right back out.

x.x.V.x.x

Pidge realized that Hunk wasn't Hunk when Hunk didn't understand a word they said about molecular theory.

The real Hunk denied crying when Pidge told them that *their* Hunk was much smarter than the robot version of him.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro knew Pidge wasn't Pidge as soon as he entered the room.

Pidge was painting their toe nails.

Pidge only ever painted their finger nails.

Never their toes.

x.x.V.x.x

"Well paladins I'm quite impressed. It seems you are beginning to understand each other more and more." Allura praised the five pilots one afternoon in the training room. Shiro and Lance were both side-eyeing the motionless group of robots while Keith was frowning in confusion. "Though, you've still missed out on several chances with the robots, especially with our robot Keith."

"The princess is correct. According to my calculations you've managed to miss our robot Keith in plain sight, four hundred and twenty kilometers." Coran added while holding up a form of Altean gadget. The paladins cocked their head in confusion while Allura's cheeks puffed out. "Er sorry, that's our distance pedometer. What I meant to say was, you missed robot Keith all of 36 times."

Shiro's eyes widened.

Keith's throat tightened.

Thirty-six times?!

"What? Are you sure?" Shiro asked while Keith's gaze remained on the floor. Even Lance, Hunk and Pidge looked just as shocked.

"Positive. Shiro you missed robot Keith 6 times. Lance you missed him 9 times. Pidge you missed him 10 times and Hunk you missed robot Keith 11 times." Coran replied and everyone's moods dropped.

"Well it's not our fault Keith never leaves his room." Lance muttered bitterly, angry that they were being scolded all because of Keith's fault.

"How is this my fault?" Keith snapped his attention towards Lance so fast, that Shiro winced when he heard a crack in his neck. Keith's eyes took on a much darker color and his jaw tightened. "You're the one who could tell the difference from a human and a robot *9 times*."

"Well maybe if you actually *tried* to bond more with your own team rather than sulking in the dark, maybe we would know it was you." Lance shot back, already stepping towards Keith. Keith followed.

"I do bond! I try. You're the one who never does! I cradled you in my arms!" Keith jabbed a finger against Lance who blushed heavily. Quickly he slapped his hand against Keith's finger.

"Don't bring that up. That was one time." Lance snarled and Shiro began to move in order to intervene. "Besides, I'm not the only one. *Everyone* couldn't tell the difference, even *Shiro* and he's the only one who likes you here!"

"Lance!"

Keith froze at the statement, unable to come up with a comeback. Rather he remained frozen in where he stood pressed against Lance, and his hand dropped lamely. Shiro was the only one to notice the light burning out of Keith's eyes. Pidge and Hunk were both too busy avoiding eye contact with Keith and Lance, and they both missed the glare from Shiro.

However, just as quickly as the raw emotion had come from Keith, it was gone and replaced with a mask of indifference that everyone knew too well. Though, rather than storm off as Shiro had been momentarily expecting, Keith simply grit his teeth and pulled himself away from Lance to glare at a wall. Lance proceeded to do the same and Shiro sighed.

This was going to be a long day.

"I suppose it's something we will just continue to work on." Allura said quietly.

"Correct princess. Though, it's a shame that you missed so many, it's no matter. You'll be able to tell Keith apart from a robot in one rickety-split tick." Coran nodded in agreement.

"Alright. That's enough training on trying to tell you apart from robots. We have a new simulation to try again today that's similar." Allura ignored the groans that she earned from everyone in the room, Shiro included.

Keith groaned out loud with the rest of his team, as his earlier thoughts began to fade away. He couldn't help but admit that he was more than a little hurt that none of his own team

members were able to tell the difference between him and a robot. He knew he wasn't the most social of the team, but he thought he had made *some* type of effort. Even, Shiro hadn't mistaken him six times.

Lance, Pidge and Hunk, that hurt less because he hadn't *known* them well enough. But Shiro...

"Today we're going to be testing your ability to fight illusions." Allura's voice broke through Keith's thoughts and soon Keith turned his entire attention to the alien. Hunk's face morphed into an expression of permanent confusion, while Pidge's eyes brightened.

"Illusions?"

"Hagger can easily turn herself or others to take our faces but that is not all the witch can do." Allura began to explain in a somber tone. "Similar to when our ship was corrupted by the Galra crystal, Hagger can easily manipulate our thoughts and create illusions. She can turn our greatest memories into our worst nightmares."

Shiro swallowed thickly upon the mentioning of Hagger once more. Images of screaming and distorted faces flashed through his mind once more. His hands clenched into fists but he felt much calmer this time around, surrounding by his team.

"Which is why you must be able to fight whatever Hagger throws at you, even your own family." Allura said with darkened eyes. Lance blinked and Keith took a step back. The Voltron paladins watched as the robot closest to Allura began to morph and take a shape. It was taller than Allura; more well-built and muscular. It was beginning to look like a familiar face.

Shiro's eyes widened when the robot finished taking place, and none other than the King of Altea, and Allura's father, stood at her side.

"She will take the people that you love, that you hold dear to your heart and turn them against you. Whether it's an illusion or not, she will use your greatest weakness against you." Allura whispered shakily and Shiro hesitated to comfort her. "She will make you fight the people that you most treasure and she'll make it so convincing that you'll forget the real person could be thousands of lightyears away...or even dead." The team watched as the robot Altea stood beside Allura, with eyes filled with so much love and warmth that it made everyone's skin crawl.

Keith felt sick.

"You must be willing to fight them, for the sake of the galaxy and you must not falter." Allura's voice barely shook when she spoke, and to everyone's surprise she had turned her body and struck her leg out to hit her robotic father in the face. Before anyone could blink she had struck the robot twice more before bringing it to its knees on the ground. Only Keith noticed the slight tremble in Allura's otherwise straight body.

"You must not hesitate." Allura straightened while the robot shifted back into its original form. "This will be your training for today."

The room was filled with silence.

x.x.V.x.x

Pidge had tears in their eyes when the robots took on the form of their father and brother. There was a moment where Pidge had almost followed after the two robotic versions of their family members, out of the training room. Shiro was the first to try and leap into action but an

invisible barrier blocked him from entering the room.

“Pidge must figure this out for themselves. We cannot interfere. Only Pidge can defeat them.” Allura’s eyes were hard but sad as she said this and Shiro slammed his fist against the invisible barrier.

He closed his eyes, feeling sick to his stomach when Pidge began to scream out for their father and brother to not leave them.

“Please don’t go! Please don’t leave me! Dad! Matt! Please!”

x.x.V.x.x

Hunk was frozen in place when the robots wore the face of his parents and sister. His darling, little sister whose dress was stained with blood and her eyes lifeless. His entire body shook but no tears were able to escape him.

He begged and pleaded with his mother and father and they towered over him, faces and skin bloody (*with sissy’s blood, oh sissy*) and eyes glowing.

Lance had stopped trying to crack jokes and had nearly thrown up at Hunk’s vision. His back was turned away from Hunk, while Pidge shivered in his arms. Keith was kneeling beside the two, unable to take his eyes away from his teammate’s misery in the training room.

“Sissy, mom, dad, why are you doing this? Why?!”

Shiro never felt more useless.

x.x.V.x.x

Lance cried when the robots took the form of his entire family. He cried even harder when his mother walked up to him, whispering sweet nothings in his ear. He cried when his father gave him a gentle pat on his head and told him how proud he was of Lance.

He even cried when his sisters and his brothers all hugged him, so proud of their *hermano*.

However, he only started to scream when his entire family began to morph into bones and rotting skin with eyes sunken in, and skin ashen. He screamed when they melted between his fingertips and he begged Allura to let him go.

Keith swallowed thickly. Shiro’s eyes blazed with unimaginable horror and guilt.

“Mama. Mama. Lo siento, siento, siento. Mama. Mama, por favor. Mama.”

There was a dent in the wall next to Shiro.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro wanted to cry. He wanted to sob and scream and tear everything apart as he felt the pain that his teammates had been feeling all day.

As he stared down the familiar faces of his brother and sister, his mother and father, and his teammates on Kerberos, he wanted to cry. If this was the pain that his teammates had felt all day – if this was the *agony* they were suffering because of this training exercise, then Shiro wanted to smash his fists through the robots and destroy everything in this training room.

He didn't want them to hurt like he had.

He didn't want them to feel his pain.

But as Shiro looked into the gleaming and murderous eyes of his family, his heart stuttered only for a second before his hand began to glow.

They had already tried to break him once.

They would never succeed.

Keith couldn't turn away when Shiro attacked the robot that took the shape of his brother.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith was...

...Confused.

He blinked once more, as if that would help, and saw the line of robots standing motionless in front of him. Not a single robot had taken shape into any other form ever since Keith had entered the room about ten minutes ago. It was unnerving if someone asked Keith.

He frowned and moved closer to the robots so that he was standing directly in front of one robot and still nothing changed. The robots didn't even so much as power on.

"Er, is this supposed to happen?" Keith finally asked, glancing up at the glass observatory deck, where his teammates were. He could see Coran and Allura both fiddling with some sort of machine.

"No." Allura said. "Though, I don't understand what is happening. According to the ship, the simulation is working just fine. It should be changing for you, but it's not."

"Whatever's happen, I bet it was Keith's fault." Lance's voice drawled through the speakers. Keith pouted.

"It is not. You're the one standing by it, you probably broke it." Keith argued and Lance snorted.

"Dude, you are the only one it won't work for. I'm tell you, it was your fault Wreck-it." Lance replied, as he crossed his arms over his chest in a display to say, 'I don't care what you say because I am right' and huffed. Keith rolled his eyes and turned back to the robot in front of him. It only took a second, but soon enough Keith was frowning and turning back to the observatory deck with a look of confusion.

"What's a Wreck-It?"

Keith could hear several gasps and sounds of disbelief coming from all except Allura and Coran. Even Shiro seemed surprised.

"Wreck-it Ralph? You're telling me you don't know the master of wrecking and destruction, in animation form? How can you not know this?!" Lance managed to sound positively, absolutely *offended* by Keith's lack of animation movie knowledge.

"Dude..." Hunk shook his head sadly and even Pidge looked at Keith with disbelief.

Keith could only shrug.

It was Allura's growl of frustration that stopped the conversation. "Keith, I apologize on my behalf, I do not know what's going on with the robots. I'm afraid we will have to stall the simulation for now until we fix the problem." Allura said softly. Keith nodded, despite the uneasy feeling that was settling in his stomach at the moment.

Something wasn't right.

"Alright. I understand. These things happen in a castle after 10,000 years, right?" Keith shrugged off his uneasy feeling and smiled weakly when Allura grinned his way.

"We'll open up the door and meet you below. Hopefully Coran and I can fix this."

"They don't call me the Coranic more nothing."

"Coran."

Keith listened as everyone's voices and footsteps began to fade away before he turned back to the motionless robots. His frown only deepened when he moved to poke and prod the robots and they still remained motionless. *Why did they stop working only for me?*

Before Keith could give it another thought, the room was suddenly plunged into total darkness.

As long as he lived, Keith would deny the loud squeak that escaped him when the lights shut off. He moved away from where he was standing and stumbled around until he felt a wall in front of him. Taking a deep breath to calm his nerves, Keith looked around as his eyes adjusted to the darkness. He'd always been easily able to adjust to the dark and see fairly clearly.

"Shiro? Pidge? Allura? What's going on?" Keith whispered over his comm.

"A power outage. It must be why the simulation stopped working." Allura's voice came over his comm and Keith breathed a sigh of relief.

He'd never felt so alone.

"It's probably from the Galra crystal." Coran added.

"Still? I thought you guys fixed that problem before Zarkon." Keith hissed.

"Keith, are you okay?" Shiro's voice was soothing over Keith's comm and he felt himself relaxing.

"Yeah Shiro, I'm good. Is everyone else okay? Are you all together?" Keith asked, biting his lip.

"Yeah, we're all here –" Shiro started.

"Aw, did wittle Keith miss us? Is he afwaid of the dark?" Keith's smile dropped in annoyance at the sound of Lance's voice over the comm. He snickered when he heard Shiro's scold and a pained yelp from Lance.

"I believe you mispronounced a few words." Keith deadpanned, earning a heavy groan from Lance. "Where are you guys? What's going on; I can't see anything."

“We can’t either. Everything is off in the castle. Allura and Coran are trying to get to spare lighting and then to the control room to fix everything. We’re waiting for spare lights and then we’ll come get you. Just stay where you are.” Shiro’s voice took on that leader, ‘I am in charge and this is for your own safety’ tone.

“I can’t even find the door. It’s not like I can go anywhere.” Keith mumbled under his breath. There was a sudden chill that ran through his body as if he could feel the most annoyed and disappointed set of eyes lingering on him. “I’ll stay put Shiro. I promise.”

“Good. We’re almost t—” There was a loud crack in the communicator, causing Keith to cry out and soon his ear was filled with only the sounds of fuzzy static.

“Shiro? Are you there? Can you hear me? Shiro? Lance? Pidge? Allura?” Keith asked over and over but no voices came, only the sound of static. His heartbeat quickened and his palms felt sweaty underneath his gloves.

It’s just because of the power outage. Nothing’s working because of that. We’re not under attack. We’re not trapped.

Keith was sure it was only a matter of a few minutes, but he felt like it was hours in his mind (*it was so lonely, so cold*) when a red light began to blink on and off in the training room and he could hear what sounded like a door opening. He breathed a sigh of relief when he noticed red lights coming throughout the castle and soon he could hear the sounds of footsteps behind him.

Quickly turning, Keith was more than surprised when he almost came nose to nose with Shiro. He blinked before jumping back and laughed nervously.

“So I see you guys got back up power on, that was pretty fast. I don’t even notice you guys were gone.” Keith said softly. Shiro only blinked and stood rigid in front of him. Keith could see Lance and the others all coming up behind him.

“Hey guys, so I guess this is all we have for now? Good thing you guys could find the backup power in the dark —”

“No thanks to you.”

Shiro’s words cut right through whatever Keith had planned to say, and Keith froze in shock. He stared wide-eyed at Shiro and noticed for the first time the angry expression on Shiro’s face.

Why is he angry? In fact, when he looked at everyone else he noticed all of them were wearing angry expressions.

“Shiro? W-What’s going on?” Keith cursed the break in his voice.

Weak.

“It was no thanks to you that we got the power back up. You did nothing. *As usual.*” Shiro practically growled and Keith flinched. He couldn’t understand why Shiro was acting this way or why everyone looked so angry at him. Sure, he could understand Lance, but Lance was always angry at him.

“What do you mean?”

“You’re *useless.*” Shiro hissed and his words cut through Keith like a knife. Keith could

feel his heart racing in his chest with his blood roaring in his ears and his palms sweating. Shiro's cold lips slowly began to morph into a cruel and wide grin.

"S-Shiro..."

"You're so pathetic. Look at you right now, you can't even fight back." Shiro laughed darkly, causing the others to snicker behind them. Once more, Keith flinched.

Why does it hurt so much?

"You're all talk when you argue with me, but when it comes down to it, you're worth nothing more than the scum on the bottom of my shoe." Lance snarled, sounding very un-Lance-like. If Keith's emotions weren't haywire or running in confusion at the moment, he would have realized this. If Keith were thinking *logically* he would see this.

But Keith usually didn't think logically.

He thought emotionally.

Instinctively.

"Why did we ever think that you could join this team?" Pidge's usually calm voice was like ice digging under Keith's skin. Slowly he took a step back and Shiro's cruel grin grew. "You're not a natural piolet and charmer like Lance, you're not a mechanic who can build machines like Hunk, you're not a soldier and leader like Shiro, and you're not a genius like me. What can you do?"

"I-I" Keith's mouth failed him at that moment and refused to cooperate. Shiro only chuckled lowly.

"*Useless.*" Keith was horrified to find tears gathering in his eyes. He knew this wasn't him; he knew this wasn't his way: to stand down and be a coward. But hearing these words coming from his own *teammates* hurt.

Why does it hurt so much?

"You're what's holding this team back Keith." Shiro snarled. "You're the reason why we cannot defeat Zarkon; why Voltron isn't strong enough." Shiro and the others move in on Keith, suddenly surrounding him from all angles. Keith attempted to move away but no matter where he turned he was surrounded by his friends.

"You tried to take on Zarkon on your own, instead of rescuing Allura." Hunk growled darkly. Hunk's voice never got that dark. "You didn't need us because you thought you were stronger. But you're not. You're weaker than all of us."

"You couldn't even stay in the Garrison. They kicked you out after they realized just how *weak* you were." Lance laughed, eyes beginning to glow red. Keith scrambled away from him, only to have Shiro's metallic arm grab his wrist. He was spun around sharply and came face-to-face with Shiro's cold grin and glowing eyes.

"You're the reason Zarkon will kill us all."

Then, Keith screamed.

“Well, good news is the backup lights are on, but the power itself may take some time to reboot.” Coran wiped imaginary sweat off his brow when he stood up from the control room. Shiro sighed, feeling far too tense and uncomfortable in the dark castle. The red lights blinking everywhere weren’t helping.

“Alright, let’s see if we can unlock Keith from the training room a –” Shiro rubbed his temples, only to be cut off by a shrilling scream, coming from down the corridor.

Keith’s scream.

Immediately, the entirety of Voltron’s team were scrambling to their feet, eyes wide with fear and body ready to fight.

“Keith!” Shiro shouted before bolting down the corridor ahead of everyone else though. He could hear Pidge, Lance, Hunk and the others right behind him and he’d never felt more proud of his team than he did in that moment.

Shiro’s heart faltered at every scream coming from the training room. His every thought came to the worst possibility that Keith was in mortal danger. That Keith was hurt, attacked or worse, dying. Images of Keith unmoving on the training room floor with lifeless eyes filled Shiro’s mind and he snarled. His adrenaline kicked in and he pushed faster down the hall (*it wasn’t fast enough. It’s never fast enough*).

“Keith!” Lance shouted from behind Shiro and for a split second Shiro grinned weakly (*this was a team, a family*) and the group came to a quick halt beside the training room. Keith’s screams were suddenly cut off and Shiro’s heart dropped.

He and Lance were the first to race towards the training room when they noticed a group of figures surrounding Keith, one of which was clawing at Keith’s neck while Keith struggled. However, the two were thrown back harshly by an invisible barrier between them and Lance.

Instantly, Shiro shot to his feet and slammed his fists against the barrier, over and over. In front of them, Keith cried out in pain when he was hoisted in the air by his captor.

“Keith! KEITH!” Shiro shouted furiously and continued to try and break through the invisible barrier. Even Lance and Hunk were slamming their bodies against the barrier but it never budged. “Allura! What’s happening? We must get to Keith!”

Allura looked momentarily panicked before she was scrambling through the castle’s server. “The simulation is on.” Allura gasped, making Shiro and the others freeze. “Whatever is in there with Keith is part of the simulation. His greatest desires and people turned against him. You cannot enter it unless he overcomes this.”

Keith screamed once more and Shiro could feel it in his bones.

But before he could argue, Lance shoved his way in front of him. “Turn it off! Whoever is with Keith is hurting him! He can’t beat these things; none of us could. This is sick, what you’re doing to us. Listen to him!” Lance’s face was filled with a fury that no one had ever seen before and Allura was rendered speechless. Upon this, Keith screamed again and laughter surrounded him.

“It’s a simulation. Keith knows it’s not real and he’ll figure it out. To beat Zarkon you must be prepared for *anything*. You all did this –” Allura began.

“And it *destroyed* us!” Pidge finally shouted and stood beside Lance. They winced upon

hearing a broken sob coming from Keith (*at least the screaming stopped*). “You’re *hurting* Keith! Listen to him. You need to turn this off, please!” Pidge was usually never one to beg, and could argue longer than anyone else here. But none of them had sounded as broken, *as defeated* as Keith did.

Keith was experiencing torture and it made Pidge’s stomach churn.

Allura was already typing away at the controller with a frown on her face. For a few agonizing seconds there were no sounds besides the dark laughter from the training room and Keith’s sobs. “I-I can’t.”

Shiro’s robotic fist clenched tightly. “*What?*”

“There’s still something wrong with the system. It’s not letting me manually shut the simulation down. I have no control over it!” Allura’s fingers were rapidly moving across the control screen as a look of horror overcame her face.

Shiro’s heart stopped.

“It must have been the power outage. Unless we get the main power source back on, we have *no control!*” Coran exclaimed. Lance and Hunk shared a sickened look before turning to where Keith was now being thrown across the room. The group of robots surrounding them suddenly came into view of the team and everyone swallowed thickly.

“Oh Keith, what a disgrace you are to the Voltron team.” Shiro’s face gleamed red underneath the red lights as he took a step towards a motionless Keith, with a robotic Pidge, Hunk and Lance behind him.

Shiro’s entire body turned cold at the maniac grin and gleaming eyes on his own face.
No.

“Keith’s most treasured people are...us?” Pidge’s voice had never sounded so small before.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith’s entire body was shaking, despite the numbness that was settling in his limbs and heart. He looked up teary-eyed, ignoring the tear tracks on his cheeks. He weakly tried to crawl away when Shiro and the others came closer to him, only to be stopped by Hunk’s foot on his back and Lance’s knee in his side. Shiro chuckled before kneeling down and harshly grabbing Keith’s chin in his cold, glowing metallic hand.

“Oh, Keith, Keith. When will you ever learn?” Shiro practically purred and his grip on Keith tightened. Keith tried to squirm away from Shiro but it was no use with Hunk and Lance on him. Shiro jerked on Keith’s chin to force him to look right at him. Keith’s eyes were only inches from Shiro’s red eyes.

Grey. Grey, Shiro has grey eyes. Why are they red? Why? Red. Red.

“Voltron doesn’t need you. Voltron can *live* without you. You are nothing. You are worth *nothing* to this team.” Shiro continued and his grin widened. Behind him Lance and Hunk laughed darkly while Hunk pushed his boot deeper into Keith’s back.

“This isn’t y-you S-Shiro! Y-You’re not you!” Keith cried out.

Shiro threw his head back in laughter. “This has always been me, *Keith*. I was just too polite to tell you how much I’ve always *despised* you. But now, now I just don’t care anymore.” Keith’s eyes filled with more tears.

No, not true. No.

“All of us don’t have to pretend anymore. Not when the fate of the universe rests in our hands.” Pidge chuckled, glasses gleaming red under the lights.

“Now we can tell you exactly how we feel about your pathetic, worthless ass.” Lance added and dug his knee painfully into Keith’s ribs. Keith bit his tongue to keep from crying out again.

“You’re parents weren’t right to leave you.” Shiro frowned suddenly and Keith’s eyes widened. He’d never told anyone but Shiro about his childhood. Then, Shiro’s look of indifference suddenly morphed into one of disgust. “*They should have killed you instead.*”

As Keith’s heart ripped apart, he could hear someone screaming out.

Was that me?

“– eith! Keith! KEITH!”

Through his sobs, Keith looked to Shiro in confusion upon hearing his voice call his name in desperation. However, it looked as though Shiro were just as confused as he was and he dropped Keith’s chin before turning to look to his left. Numbly, Keith weakly looked over in the direction and his heart nearly stopped in shock.

Shiro’s grin twisted.

Banging on an invisible wall were another Shiro, Lance, Pidge, Hunk and Allura.

“Guys...” Keith whispered hoarsely. Shiro (*no, robot Shiro*) and the other robots turned to look at Keith still grinning. Immediately (*Robot*) Shiro grabbed Keith by the chin and ripped him out from under Lance and Hunk.

“Look at this Keith, your real team has come to tell you how *worthless* you really are.” (*Robot*) Shiro cackled, loud enough for the human versions of team Voltron to hear and they froze in their actions. “You’ve come to tell him how pathetic he is, haven’t you?”

“No! Keith don’t listen to him!” Shiro (*the real Shiro, real, so real*) shouted with a look of horror on his face. Keith’s arms hung limply at his sides when (*Robot*) Shiro raised him up like a trophy.

“Oh don’t be shy, tell him how you truly feel.” (*Robot*) Shiro smirked. “Tell him how you wish he were dead! How it’s always his fault your plans go awry and how Zarkon can never be defeated!”

“Tell him how *nobody even likes him here.*” (*Robot*) Lance howled with laughter. The real Lance shuddered bitterly.

“Don’t listen to them! They’re wrong Keith!” The real Pidge screamed.

“Tell him how *weak* he is.” (*Robot*) Shiro snarled and his metallic hands tightened around Keith’s neck. A red glow came over the arm and Keith cried out at the hot, burning pain against his

skin.

“Keith! Keith, please, you must fight back!” Allura cried. Keith could hear nothing else but the sound of his flesh burning against his hand. Behind the robots and Keith, the Voltron team could only watch in horror as Keith was tortured right before their eyes.

Shiro’s jaw clenched and his eyes darkened. A purple glow formed around his metallic hand and grew brighter and brighter as he made a fist. Then, in one motion, Shiro had swung his fist back before *slamming* it against the invisible barrier as hard as it could. For a second nothing happened.

Then the barrier cracked. Right under Shiro’s hand.

Shiro’s jaw set. “Get your bayards. Now.”

And Shiro swung his hand at the barrier once more.

x.x.V.x.x

“Even if you defeat us, you will still amount to *nothing* to your team.” (*Robot*) Shiro hissed, pulling Keith’s burning face to his own face. Keith barely struggled when he could no longer hear his team fighting for him. “They will abandon you Keith, just like everyone else has. You’ll always be alone, as long as you live. Even if you win this war and when everything is over, *they will leave you behind.*”

Keith couldn’t even swallow through the pain, when suddenly a purple light filled his vision and (*Robot*) Shiro’s head was no longer attached to his body. The robot splutter and sparks flew from its severed neck before it released its grip on Keith, dropping him to the floor.

Through tunnel vision, Keith could see Shiro (*he’s real, so, so real*) fighting against (*Robot*) Lance, with Lance at his side. Hunk and Pidge were back to back, shouting and fighting against their own robots with such *violence* and destruction.

Keith could feel his vision darkening and everything was becoming blurry to him. His scalding neck was no longer burning.

“Shiro...” He whispered.

To his surprise, Shiro stopped fighting immediately at the call of his name, before kneeling beside Keith. Keith cried out when his injuries shifted but Shiro continued to cradle him in his arms.

“Keith, Keith, I’m here! It’s okay, you’re safe now. Don’t worry, we’ve got you.” Shiro rambled while Keith’s vision continued to darken.

“S...Sorry...So...S...Sorry.” Keith gurgled, feeling a trickle of blood drip down his chin. Shiro’s eyes widened in horror.

“It’s not your fault Keith, don’t worry buddy. You did nothing wrong.” Lance was right by Shiro’s side with tears in his eyes. Pidge and Hunk were hovering above the three with worried expressions while Allura and Coran tried to move them towards the medic chambers.

“W...Worth...lss...S’rry...” Keith whispered, much to everyone’s horror.

“Keith! *Keith! KEITH!*”

Then there was no more.

x.x.V.x.x

How can you save me from my nightmares, when my nightmares are you?

A House was Awake with Shadows and Monsters

Chapter Notes

Holy Wazowski! You guys are all incredible, let me say that first! I never expected this type of response from this little fic and I am honestly blown away by everyone's support and love for this fic! Thank you all so much! I am honored by your Kudos and bookmarks and every little comment made me laugh and smile and made me so happy. Thank you! And if anyone ever wants to cry about Voltron and Space dad with his kids on tumblr, hook me up at @lordofthebigtimesupernatural! There is some warning for blood and a small bit of gore in this chapter, in case anyone needs this warning. Also the rating goes up. It shouldn't go up any more though.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I don't want to let you in.

I don't want to be a part of you.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro paced the medic bay for the umpteenth time that day. Though, no one bothered to point out that his pacing was doing little more than frying their already hot nerves. To be fair though, no one else was faring much better than their leader.

Lance was slumped up against the wall staring into nothing. It was a bit unnerving to see the usually hot-headed and energetic boy, reduced to silence and tears.

Pidge was tinkering away at the medic pod, despite Allura's previous attempts to keep them away. They were more or less just trying to keep their hands busy, since there was nothing else to be configured in order to speed up the healing process.

Hunk was leaning against Lance, trying to offer his comfort and support to *someone*. He felt utterly useless just sitting around and doing nothing. If his comfort could be used, then he was sure as hell going to use it.

Allura and Coran were both trying to fix the ship and completely remove any trace of the Galra crystal from their ship. Allura couldn't watch any longer and went to keep her mind and hands busy and away from the thoughts of Keith.

Little Keith.

The young red paladin was currently standing in one of the cryogenic healing pods in the medic bay. Where he had been for the past 12 hours. Lance had only taken about a few hours of resting in the pod to heal, but Keith was taking over double that time amount and he still wasn't faring much better. While Lance had been bruised and cut up a bit from the explosion (*that was from the Galra, always from the Galra*) Keith had suffered some major burns to his throat and neck as well as a few internal injuries. Allura assured the team that Keith would make a full recovery, but they had been close.

Too close.

“Is he done yet?” Pidge’s voice was soft and measly, sounding much like the young child that had lost their father a year ago, and not the pilot of the Green Lion. Shiro paused in his pacing to take a look at Keith (*he looked young, too, too young*) and sighed.

“It should be just a few more ticks.” Allura’s voice interrupted Shiro before he could answer. Lance immediately jumped to his feet, with Hunk quickly following in suit. Hunk whined at the sudden movement but couldn’t help but slink over towards the pod holding Keith. Allura also headed over towards the healing pod, with Coran noticeably missing.

“Seriously? How much more is a few ticks going to do?” Lance rolled his eyes in faux annoyance. However, Shiro noticed Lance scratching along the back of his hands in obvious nervousness. His eyes softened.

“You’d be surprised.” Allura simply said, eyes trained on Keith’s motionless body.

“Keith shouldn’t even be in there.” Pidge muttered bitterly, much to everyone’s surprise. Shiro closed in his in an attempt to remain calm while Lance and Hunk swallowed thickly. “It’s not like we fought *Galras* or got blown up. He’s in there because of this ship.”

“Pidge...” Hunk began quietly.

“No Hunk, they’re right.” Lance interrupted quickly. Hunk protested for a second in surprise while Pidge snorted. “Keith is in there because he got hurt *on this ship*. There were no Galras or aliens or monsters. Except for some damn robots that nearly killed him!”

“He didn’t...he didn’t nearly die Lance.” Hunk replied weakly.

Lance rolled his eyes. “*Look at his neck!*”

Everyone froze.

Lance was right and he wasn’t lying. Even though the team had watched the skin being recrafted and repaired on Keith’s neck where he had been burned, there was still a small amount of pink scarring along the underside of Keith’s jaw and neck. Scars that won’t go away.

Always a reminder.

“That’s enough.” Shiro’s voice barely raised higher than normal, but it was enough to shut everyone else up. Lance crossed his arms over his chest bitterly while Hunk rubbed the back of his neck. Shiro felt for both boys (*we’re all just kids, aren’t we?*) and knew both of them were just scared. But he didn’t have the time or energy to deal with any fighting today.

“What I really want to know, though, is *what happened?*” This time Shiro had turned towards Allura who had finally looked away from Keith long enough to catch her eye. He could see the underlying sadness and pain that was in her eyes but at the moment he felt that it wasn’t enough.

“We can review the time lapse of the training room, but you already know that it was his version of the simulation –” Allura began to explain.

“No I want to know *why* it happened.” Shiro said quickly. He managed to keep his anger down, knowing that this whole mishap wasn’t Allura’s fault. It wasn’t anyone’s fault really – especially not Keith’s – but Shiro wanted someone to blame.

He wanted someone to hurt.

Like himself.

“I want to know how a *simulator* nearly killed one of your paladins? Why on Earth was it even set to kill? Even if Keith had to defeat it, don’t you think it would have been a good idea to set the simulation up so that if a person cannot defeat it they won’t die?” Shiro asked pointedly with arms crossed over his chest.

Allura’s eyes narrowed and her jaw tightened. “I do not appreciate your tone of blame *Shiro*.” Oh boy, Shiro knew he was in for it.

“I’m not putting the blame on you.” (*I only blame myself.*) “I just don’t understand why you have a simulation that could kill him. He’s just a *kid*.”

“Hey now, we’re all basically the same age here! You’re no Veteran Shiro!”

Shiro ignored Lance’s outburst with a pointed look to Allura.

“I understand that you are upset. What has happened to young Keith affects us all Shiro, but I can assure you that I would never put any of you in harm’s way. You’re my friends and I would never want to see you die.” Allura clenched her fist and growled at Shiro. Shiro resisted the urge to flinch and then he sighed.

“I’m sorry princess. I’m just...upset.”

Allura’s expression softened causing her to place a gentle hand on Shiro’s shoulder. “We all are worried for Keith’s health. I understand. Coran believes this had to do with the Galra’s crystal interference. As it has tampered with the ship before, it must have taken control and affected the robot’s mindset. Normally they would turn off after so long of defeat, but this time...” Allura trailed off and dropped her eyes.

Shiro sighed. “Has Coran fixed the ship completely?”

“Yes.” Allura nodded firmly. “All traces of the crystal have been removed and he is currently triple checking every mainframe in this ship. By tonight I can guarantee that this ship will be 100 percent Galra free.” Shiro felt himself and everyone else in the room breathe a sigh of relief.

It still wasn’t enough.

Whoosh.

Shiro felt the hairs on the back of his neck stand up and soon everyone else was frozen in place upon hearing the sound of a pod releasing its human. Within a second everyone was surrounding the now open pod that contained Keith, just in time for Keith to stumble forward into Shiro’s arm.

Keith groaned tiredly, feeling as if his entire body were made out of jelly. His knees buckled under the weight of his body when warm air suddenly rushed towards him. His eyelids felt as if sandbags were weighing him down and he could barely move his arms at his side. Luckily, he stumbled straight into something that was pretty solid. And warm.

Blearily, Keith tried to open his eyes and winced at the lights around him. Groaning again he shut his eyes and buried his face into the warm wall in front of him.

The warm, *breathing* wall.

Confused, Keith glanced upward and was met with a blurry face before him. “Huh?”

“Keith, hey buddy. How are you feeling?” Shiro resisted the urge to smile as seeing Keith breathing, moving and *awake*. He gently pulled Keith up straight but kept a firm hold on him when he noticed how much Keith’s legs were trembling.

“W-Wha’ happened?” Keith mumbled as he blinked and tried to clear his focus so he could look around. He could make out the shapes of people surrounding them and the colors of the room they were in, but his head felt fuzzy and his memories were jumbled.

“You had to be put in the medic pod, for your injuries.” Lance spoke up and Keith frowned (*familiar voice; so familiar*). “You’ve been in there for over half a day now, so it’s no wonder you’re walking around like a baby.”

“Lance.” Shiro couldn’t even look disappointed in Lance’s direction. Not when Keith was alive and healthy and when Lance finally didn’t look like he was going to cry again. It had been far too long since he’s seen the boy’s smile, and he never thought he would have missed it so much.

Keith’s frowned remained as he continued to blink up at the dark figure in front of him. Slowly, the figure became clearer and clearer as his eyes adjusted to the lights and cleared out. Eventually, he could make out who exactly was holding him upright and for a moment, Keith’s stomach churned.

Shiro’s face came into view as a malicious smile grew and his eyes were glowing red. Bright, terrifying red.

“You’re worthless.”

Keith nearly screamed out loud, but instead shoved Shiro away from him. However, Shiro had been his only means of support on weakened legs and when Keith tried to step backwards, his legs stumbled and crumbled. Upon hitting the ground, Keith’s eye widened when he noticed everyone else in the room.

Lance was cackling beside Pidge who glared angrily with beady red eyes, and Hunk continued to laugh, and laugh, and laugh. Always laughing, why were they laughing?

“You are nothing.”

“You will be the end to Voltron.”

“You don’t belong here.”

Keith scrambled away from the terrifying images with a whine so loud that it even frightened himself.

Shiro and the others were horrified by Keith’s sudden outburst and display of actions. Lance was the first to recover from the group and he attempted to move towards Keith in attempts to calm him down. However, this only seemed to make Keith hyperventilate and try to weakly crawl back even further. Shiro couldn’t believe how terrified Keith was. Keith’s eyes were *looking* at everyone, darting back and forth between one person to another, but yet he wasn’t *seeing* anyone.

Was this how he looked during his attacks?

“Shiro! Shiro! Do something!” Pidge demanded, finally breaking Shiro from his hypnotic gaze. Shiro looked down at them upon feeling a harsh tug on his shirt before snapping his attention to Keith who was still trying to scramble away from Hunk and Lance. Carefully he maneuvered himself in front of Lance and Hunk, then forcibly stopped the two from getting any closer to Keith. Once that was settled, he took a deep breath and faced Keith.

Terrified Keith.

“Keith, it’s alright.” Shiro said softly and slowly. He lowered himself onto one knee when Keith’s back hit a healing pod and he had nowhere else to go. “It’s me Shiro. You’re safe now and no one is going to hurt you. What you’re see are those robots that looked like us; none of us are going to hurt you, okay?” Keith’s eyes were still wide and animalistic, while his movements were still too jerky for Shiro’s liking.

“We rescued Allura and escaped from Zarkon a week ago, remember? You helped us to get valuable information on Quintessence. We’ve been flying to try and outrun Zarkon and we’re on Allura’s ship. You’re seeing memories from yesterday, but you’re safe now. No one is going to hurt you, okay Keith?” Shiro’s voice never wavered nor falter and he remained crouched and small in front of Keith. He noticed that Keith’s movements weren’t as jerky and his large eyes were now solely focused on Shiro.

“You’re from Earth. You went to the Garrison and you were the best pilot the in the Garrison – ”

“One of the best two!” Lance intervened and Shiro rolled his eyes.

“You and *Lance* were of the best pilots at the Garrison. Do remember the Garrison? I met you there, when you were trying to sneak into a simulation ship. I caught you trying to sneak in, and instead of begging for me not to tell, you said, “Well, what are *you* doing sneaking around, Lieutenant?” I’ll never forget, even back then you were a sass. Then I showed you a real ship and you told me that one day you were going to fly to space, and you were going to fly until you could find somewhere called home.” Shiro paused at the silence that came over everyone, including Keith. “Do you remember Keith?”

Shiro watched as Keith’s eyes slowly returned to their normal size and recognition instantly flooded them. Keith blinked a couple time, always looking at Shiro before swallowing.

“S-Shiro?”

Shiro smiled. “Hey, welcome back buddy.” Then Keith surprised everyone by flinging himself into Shiro’s arms.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith wasn’t the same.

Nobody expected him to be after what was labeled “the incident.” After all, nobody was the same since seeing their worst nightmares (*everyone saw it; everyone saw their nightmares*). But Keith was worse than anyone.

Keith was normally a quiet person; everyone had figured that out right away. But he wasn’t *silent*. He usually had something to add to the conversation, even if it was to start a fight with Lance. Honestly, the team would have wished that Keith and Lance would start a fight. But Keith wouldn’t have that.

After Keith had sat shaking in Shiro's arm for about an hour he had requested to go to bed and Shiro let it go, knowing how emotionally exhausted the Red Pilot must be. However, it was when Keith didn't come down to dinner or breakfast the next day, did he start to worry.

He and the others had given Keith about a week to have some space to himself, figuring Keith just needed time before he was back to the hot temperamental and instinctive boy they all knew.

Except it never came.

"Shiro, something's wrong with Keith." Pidge finally blurted out loud during lunch (*Keith was missing once again*). Shiro sighed when he noticed Hunk and Lance both looking at him too. The space dish on his plate suddenly looked even less pleasing than normal.

"Guys, he's been through a very traumatic experience. It's going to take time." Shiro said. Pidge frowned while Lance snorted and pushed his food around on his plate.

"We all went through something traumatic but you don't see any of us doing the silent treatment." Lance argued. Hunk nodded beside him while Pidge remained silent.

"Yes, while that is true, you all have, everyone copes with trauma differently." Shiro nodded in agreement. Pidge looked down at their feet. "Lance, you have your music. Hunk, you have food. Pidge, you have your photos and your computers to work with. I have my training and you guys." The others looked surprised by Shiro's statement, though no one bothered to voice it out loud. "Keith just needs to find what helps him cope, and maybe being quiet is it."

"But, you know it's not healthy." Pidge pointed out.

"Yes, I do know that." Shiro admitted, more from experience than knowledge. He let out a deep sigh, at seeing the frustrated looks on everyone's faces.

"Look guys, what Keith went through is very different from what you went through. I'm not invalidating your trauma, but listen." Shiro held up his hand quickly when he began to hear protests from the rest of his team. "But what Keith went through was torture. Both physical and mental."

Lance's eyes widen at the word, while Pidge's face paled. Even Hunk seemed affected as he pushed his plate of food away.

"Like the rest of us, those robots got into his head and hurt him. They didn't stop at looks or illusions. They said *exactly* the right things to hurt Keith in unimaginable ways. Then on top of that he was burned and thrown around. Torture isn't something you just brush aside guys. It's something that never leaves you, no matter how hard you try to forget or act normal." The others were silent as they heard the double meaning towards torture. He wasn't just talking about Keith.

He was talking about himself.

"Torture can tear you apart and eat you up inside. And unfortunately, Keith has the mental and the *physical* scars to always remind him."

Pidge looked conflicted and Shiro wanted nothing more than to take it away. "Then, that's why we gotta help him. If we leave him by himself, then it's going to destroy him. He'll never get better at this rate."

Shiro nodded. "Your right Pidge. We have to show him we care. But we cannot push him

or force him in anyway.”

Lance frowned. “Why not? Don’t some people just need a little shove to gain their footing?”

“Some. But by forcing Keith to come out, then we’re no better than the illusions he suffered from before.” Shiro deadpanned. Lance’s throat tightened. “Keith’s greatest fear was us not accepting him, demanding him to change or else he is weak. His greatest fear is that we will turn our backs on him. And we need to get rid of those thoughts but showing him what he means to us. To this team. This family.” Shiro looked every one of the paladins in the eyes, daring them to speak up or fight him. He was pleasantly surprised to see everyone on the same page as him.

“Are we really the only family Keith knows?” Hunk finally asked quietly.

Shiro’s heart thudded at the question and his throat tightened. It was a touchy subject for Keith and even Shiro didn’t know the whole story about his parents and family.

“It would appear so. Keith was an orphan. I don’t know if he knew his parents at all, but it sounds like he was orphaned from a pretty young age.” Shiro sighed softly. The others, thankfully, remained quiet. “Keith doesn’t comprehend things like you and I. His mind works a little bit different due to this. He never had a family to rely on and trust or feel the love that we all have been lucky enough to have had. He doesn’t understand what it means to rely on others and trust them with everything, because he’s never had that before. This, us, Voltron, everything about it is new and foreign to him.”

“So we just have to teach him?” Pidge asked, rubbing their chin thoughtfully. Shiro smiled at them. “We just need to teach him what it means to be a part of a team; a family.”

“That’ll be easy!” Lance finally spoke up, and his face looked far more full of life than it had in days. His eyes were lit with a suspicious mischief that Shiro made a mental note to keep an eye on. “*¡Mi familia es muy grande!* I have lots of practice making people feel homey in my family.”

“We can do that no problem.” Pidge began to smile alongside Lance. “We’ve defeated monsters and Galras before!”

“Yeah!” Hunk cheered eagerly. “I can teach him to bake and show him all the recipes I know!”

Shiro smiled as the others fell into a conversation about what they planned to do with Keith and his heart warmed. *They might just be kids, but they have the hearts of lions.*

Out of the corner of his eyes, he noticed a trail of a red jacket disappearing from the entrance of the room.

x.x.V.x.x

“It’s all your fault Keith. Why did you do this to us? Why did you kill us?” Shiro’s voice was thick with blood and his red eye bore into Keith. Keith stared in absolute horror at the blood that was drenching his boots and soaking the entire floor of the ship, coming from Shiro and the others.

“Why Keith? Why? I just wanted to see my family; I wanted to go home.” Lance hissed furiously, despite the massive gash across the entirety of his face. The blood turned thicker and darker as Lance’s blood mixed with Shiro’s.

“You are nothing.” Pidge’s voice sound far too heavy and far too dark for someone of their size and nature. “You killed us Keith! *You killed us!*” Keith stepped back with hands trembling, away from the sprawled torso that had once belonged to Pidge. Tears pricked in the corner of his eyes.

“If you were stronger, you could have saved us and stopped Zarkon.” Hunk stared with empty eyes and blood all across his face.

“Why are you so weak Keith? Why can’t you be worth something?” Shiro’s gurgled voice, with a throat full of oozing blood, became bitter as he spoke.

“I-I’m not! I can save you guys! I promise!” Keith cried desperately and reached out towards Shiro. He cried out in pain and *fear* when Shiro reached out with his metallic hand (*his other was ripped off, thrown somewhere*).

“But you are! We’d still be alive if it weren’t for you.” Shiro hissed, pulling Keith dangerously close to his own bloody face. Keith winced and struggled to free his arm. From the corners of his eyes he could see Lance, Hunk and Pidge all trying to crawl towards him. Keith felt his heart race.

“Why did you kill us Keith?”

“Why did you kill us?”

“Why?”

“Why?”

“Why?”

“Why?”

“Why?”

x.x.V.x.x

Why didn’t you save us Keith?

Keith felt his eyes snap open and the ceiling over his bed suddenly came into view. A scream tore through his lips as Keith shot into an upright position and scrambled out of his bed. The scream died down once his back hit the floor, causing the air to rush out of him.

His breathing was coming in far too quickly now and he couldn’t seem to get enough air (*was the ship running out of oxygen?*). His chest felt too tight and his eyes too wide. His throat was clench shut and sweat drenched the back of his neck.

The voices of his nightmare still echoed in his mind. Over and over again.

That’s right.

It was just a nightmare.

Keith jumped violently when he heard the sound of sudden banging on his door. He shoved himself backwards until his back was pressed up against a wall, but still his breathing didn’t slow down nor did his heart.

“Keith? Keith, are you alright? Keith?” Shiro’s voice.

It’s all your fault Keith.

Keith whined keenly and buried his face into his knees while his chest continued to heave. His grabbed fistfuls of his hair.

“Keith, please open the door! Keith!”

Why did you kill us?

Keith curled further into his body, feeling a raged sob pass through his lips. His fingers tightened in his hair until it hurt (*that was good, yes, let this hurt so my heart won’t*). The banging on the door continued and with every loud bang, Keith curled further and further into himself.

“Keith, please. Please open the door for us.” Shiro was begging now.

You are nothing.

Keith’s sobs grew louder and louder until they drowned out the sounds of the banging on the door. One hand moved to tightly clutch the material of his shirt against his chest (*it hurts, it hurts, why does it hurt so much?*).

“Keith. Please.”

Keith ignored Shiro’s whisper and continued to sob, curled on the floor of his room with his sheets on the floor and his hands fisted in his hair and shirt, feeling more alone than he ever had in his life.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith avoided the paladins for the next week. Even though they often staked outside of his room by the door. It was Pidge who noticed Keith was *avoiding* them.

And their heart broke.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith didn’t notice Pidge entering the room until they had taken a seat beside the window and Keith. Keith forced himself not to flinch when Pidge took a seat within a foot of himself. He’d been pretty good at avoiding the entire team (*he really didn’t want to, he wished they believed him*) and had managed to get out of time with everyone every day this week.

In all honesty, Keith was angrier at himself than he was at everyone else. He was angry that he was little this stupid fear control. Keith knew, deep down in his heart, *he knew* that his team meant no harm and they weren’t going to hurt him.

They never had.

Except, Keith couldn’t control the underlying fear that ran through his veins whenever Shiro raise his hand too close to Keith’s neck (*his fingers were wrapping around his neck, so tightly*). He couldn’t stop the flinch whenever Lance opened his mouth (*were they cruel words or not?*), or stop trembling when Hunk’s bigger form stood too close to him (*he’ll snap your neck too quickly*). He couldn’t stop the shivers when Pidge’s glasses reflected in the light (*were they red?*). Keith knew that he was being ridiculous and paranoid and yet he couldn’t stop his body from

responding.

He couldn't stop the nightmares.

He couldn't stop seeing their faces glaring down at him.

He couldn't stop hearing their laughter.

And it made him sick.

"Sometimes, I'm afraid that my dad and brother are dead."

Keith paused in his pitied thoughts for a moment when Pidge softly spoke up. He nervously glanced over to the Green Pilot to see Pidge was still about a foot away from him and looking out the window, into space, rather than looking at him. Keith swallowed.

"Huh?"

"Sometimes...sometimes I think that Matt and my dad are already dead. And that we're wasting time trying to find them." Pidge whispered and Keith could feel his chest tightening. "I know I should be more optimistic and I try and try so hard every day, but it's exhausting. Sometimes I just...I just wonder if they're even alive and I'm scared. Not knowing what's happened to them or what's happening to them, scares me."

Keith sat in an uncomfortable silence for a moment, unsure of how to respond. He had never been good at comforting others before, and he figured he was probably the last person to help at this time.

"Um, it's okay?" Keith tried. To his utmost surprise, Pidge actually cracked a tiny smile at this.

"You're pretty bad at this, aren't you?" Pidge asked and finally turned to face Keith with sad, hazel eyes. Keith rubbed his palms together.

"Ah, no. I-I'm probably terrible at this." He admitted, causing Pidge to chuckle.

"Then that makes two of us." Pidge said. Keith slowly stopped rubbing his palms, but his gaze wavered off Pidge every few seconds, unable to look at them for two long.

"That's why my simulation was of them. I'm so afraid of them being dead. It hurts to think about it, but what if I never do see them again? What if I never get the chance to say goodbye to them or that I loved them?" Pidge's voice began to crack near the end of their ramblings and Keith stopped rubbing his hands together. He found himself slowly inching his way towards Pidge.

If Pidge noticed, they didn't say anything.

Thankfully.

"Pidge..." Keith licked his lips when Pidge looked their way once more. "It's – It's okay to be afraid. But if it means anything I...I don't think they're dead." Pidge's eyes widened at this and for a split second Keith momentarily panicked. "I mean I don't know for sure, but I just figure that you would probably be able to tell if something had happened to them? Like you would feel something if they died or figure it out yourself, you know?"

While Keith continued to ramble, Pidge was stunned by his words. They thought back to

before they had entered the Garrison, when they broke into that commander's computer. Even then they hadn't felt right about the statement put out on the Kerberos mission. Even then they hadn't believed that everyone was dead and dug to find out the truth until they could find it. So why would now be any different.

"You're right." They said.

Keith stopped in mid-rant before looking down at Pidge who was looking at Keith with eyes so bright and a smile so wide, that it was impossible not to smile back. Slowly, he found himself with a small smile of his own before Pidge threw their arms around Keith's chest. Keith jumped slightly, more unsure of what to do, than out of fear.

"Thank you Keith." Pidge said into Keith shirt. Awkwardly the Red Pilot gave Pidge's head a pat. "You know, you're not as bad at this as you think. Just a bit awkward but we can work on that." Keith smile widened and a warmth began to bubble in his chest.

"Thanks."

"You know, if you stopped avoiding us, that is." Keith felt his smile drop immediately at Pidge's pointed look. However, instead of the glare and anger that he had been expecting, there was nothing but concern and sympathy in Pidge's bright eyes.

"I might not...I might not understand how you feel; after everything you've been through." Pidge admitted once they pulled away from Keith. They did, however, leave both hands planted on Keith's shoulders while they stared into Keith's eyes. "But I want you to know that you don't have to avoid us. It hurts everyone and it...it hurts you. Please don't avoid us Keith." Keith swallowed thickly, unsure of how to respond to that.

Thankfully, Pidge went on. "You don't have to talk about it if you're not ready, but that doesn't mean we don't care about you. We want to help you, even if it's just sitting at dinner with you so you're not alone. Or letting me talk about my worries to you. Please don't shut us out, not after all we've been through." Pidge pleaded softly and damn, Keith could feel his heart beginning to burst at their confession.

Keith knew he had one of two options.

He could run or he could stay.

"Okay Pidge. I promise."

He chose to stay.

x.x.V.x.x

There was so much blood.

Everything was red. Too, too red. Keith couldn't tell if it was from him or from them. He couldn't tell much of anything anymore.

There was so much blood.

He woke up screaming again that night. This time, though, he remained in bed and trembled in his arms. Shiro was knocking at the door, as he had been every night this week.

"Keith, can I come in this time?"

“Keith man, I haven’t seen you in ages. I was beginning to think you were part alien and blending into the background.” Keith actually rolled his eyes at Lance’s comment when Keith entered Lance’s bedroom that evening.

Lance, on the other hand, was more than shocked when he saw Keith enter his room. He’d nearly fallen off the bed, but he wasn’t about to show his rival that display of weakness. No he had to be suave and cool.

“Just because I don’t announce my presence every time I enter a room doesn’t mean I’ve turned into an alien.” Keith said before plopping down on the bed beside Lance. There was a fair amount of distance between the two on the bed. Lance’s fingers itched to move closer to Keith but Shiro’s reminder rang in his head.

Don’t force him.

“So what brings you to my humble abode?” Lance leaned back against the headboard in a bored manner. He was confused when Keith didn’t immediately answer, but instead looked down at his hands resting in his lap. “Keith?”

Keith jumped at the sound of his name and looked up to see Lance watching him with concern. His gut twisted at the sight. *It was now or never.*

“Did you...did you really mean what you said? Before the simulation?” He whispered. Lance blinked. He didn’t understand what Keith was talking about and he raced through his brain in order to try to figure out Keith’s words. This was the first time in *weeks* that Keith was willingly talking to him.

He couldn’t afford to blow this now.

“Uh, what? I say a lot dude; you’re going to have to be more specific.”

Keith grimaced. “Um, about, no one wanting me, uh, on the team? Did you really mean that?” Keith asked hesitantly.

Instantly, Lance felt his heart drop. *Of course he would remember that.*

“Oh, Keith no! I swear I didn’t mean it. I was angry and you know how I get when I’m angry. I say a lot of stupid shit – heck you point it out to me all the time!” Lance responded, feeling his face flush a deep scarlet. Keith still didn’t look up. “Look, ah. I’m not good at this but, I’m sorry.”

That got Keith’s attention.

He looked up to see Lance staring down at his lap, with his face burning. “I may not have liked you before – you know with the whole arch rival thing. Keith and Lance neck in neck. But I swear I don’t hate you now. Nobody does! Keith, after forming Voltron and being a team together, you guys are like...like a second family to me.” Keith felt his own face beginning to heat up at Lance’s unexpected words.

“What?”

Lance rubbed his neck and groaned. “Ugh, man. You, Pidge, Hunk, Shiro, even Allura and Coran are like a second family. Like a home for me, while we’re all lost and running in space

from evil fluffy angry aliens. I mean, my real family will always come first and I love them and I miss them so much that it's crazy and some nights I just wish –" Lance bit his lip to keep from going on and Keith notice the way that Lance's shoulders slumped.

"You wish?" He asked. Lance hesitated.

"I just wish I could go home." Lance admitted. "I miss my mama and my papa. I miss my sisters and brothers, and my Tio and Tia. I miss my Abuela. I miss the blue sky where you could see every constellation at night when it was so clear. I miss the turquoise water on the beaches of Cuba, where the sand stuck to your toes but felt like a warm, soft blanket." Keith watched as Lance curled further and further into himself and his shoulders began to shake, but still the boy didn't cry.

Keith inched closer.

"I miss the stars too." Keith said. Lance looked up with teary eyes.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I know we're in space and surrounded by them, but it's not the same, you know?" Keith smiled softly when Lance nodded with extra vigor. "When I was little I used to count all the constellations I could see and I would write them down in a book. I filled up a lot of pages after I got kicked out of the Garrison."

He smiled when he heard a watery laugh from Lance.

"You loser. Of course you would be stargazing in the desert." Even if it was an insult, Keith was just glad to finally hear a bit of joy in Lance's voice. "My family and I used to sit outside on blankets, on the tallest hill by my house every night for every summer since I could remember. We'd make it a contest to see who could name the most constellations."

"Let me guess, your sister always won?" Keith smirked.

"Hey! I'll have you know that I was the reigning champion for three summers straight!" Lance argued as his tears were forgotten. Keith laughed lightly at this and even Lance managed a chuckle. The two sat in a comfortable silence before Lance gently placed a hand over Keith's.

"You know when I said this team was my family, that includes you." Lance said and Keith swallowed thickly. "I know you're scared of me right now, but you're a part of my new family. And you always will be. I'll be here for you, whenever you want to talk."

Keith felt so overwhelmed with a new and unfamiliar emotion that it felt as if he were suffocating. Rather than responding, he did the next most logical thing.

He slammed a pillow in Lance's face.

"Shut up!"

"Oh my god, Keith way to ruin a moment! *We bonded!*"

x.x.V.x.x

Why can't you do anything right?

You don't belong here.

You're not one of us.

You're useless.

Worthless.

Weak.

Keith sobbed into his pillow that night. This time, Shiro only knocked once.

“Keith?”

x.x.V.x.x

“I’m teaching you how to bake today.”

Keith blinked owlshly at Hunk who had plopped a bowl down on the counter in front of Keith and a pile of space ingredients. Hunk didn’t even bother waiting for a response before he was pushing a bag of purple power towards Keith.

Keith had been joining them all week for every meal, training and to just sit. Even with Hunk, but the two had yet to really have a chance to *talk*. So Hunk decided to take matters into his own hands with what he did best.

Baking and cooking.

“Er, what?”

“I. Am going to teach you, how to bake.” Hunk responded as he sorted through the ingredients. “Everyone should know how to bake. Baking is good and therapeutic, plus it’s delicious and who doesn’t love treats? Tell me, how much baking have you done before?” Keith was still trying to comprehend Hunk’s first sentence to him, that he barely had time to register that Hunk was asking him questions.

“Uh...never?”

Hunk’s mouth never dropped open so fast. “What?”

“N...ever?” Keith hesitantly repeated.

“You’ve never baked before? Anything? No cupcakes or cakes? Cookies or bread? No muffins?” Hunk looked positively horrified by these statements and Keith blinked again.

“No?” It sounded more like a question than a response.

“You live in the desert, by yourself! How did you survive?” Hunk cried.

“Um, canned food and premade dinners? And lots of cereal I guess?” Keith shrugged. If possible, Hunk’s look of horror turned to being appalled.

“That’s a true horror story!” Hunk cried before straightening himself and grabbing all the ingredients. “No, no. This simply won’t do. We are going to teach you to bake *and* cook. Then you’ll thank me when you’re able to make a plate of mouthwatering chicken parmesan, out of nothing. And the best cookies in the whole galaxy.”

“O...kay?” Keith stood up when Hunk gestured for him to move by his side. He was still a bit wary standing next to anyone or getting to close, but Hunk ignored the hesitance.

“Alright, the first thing you should always do is assess how fresh your ingredients are.” He picked up a pile of green herb-like things off the counter. Keith frowned and stared at the herbs.

“How exactly do we do that?”

“You smell them. Taste them. Sometimes break it and listen for the sound.” Hunk shrugged. “There’s a lot of ways to tell if they’re fresh. But if you don’t want to go into that much detail or work, the easiest way is to just assess the color. You’ll be able to tell if it’s healthy enough.”

“Okay.” It sounded simple enough so Keith shrugged. The two continued with the lesson for a little while longer. Keith managed to mix, stir and pour the ingredients with only spilling something six times already (*Hunk was slightly disturbed by Keith’s awkwardness in the kitchen*).

Once the mix was placed in the oven, Keith looked over at the gleeful expression on Hunk’s face and spoke.

“Why are you doing this, Hunk?”

Hunk turned to him in confusion. “Huh, what do you mean?”

“Why are you doing all this, with me?” Keith gestured around the kitchen vaguely.

“Well to teach you how to cook of course! Baking can be very therapeutic and calming.” Hunk smiled down at him. Keith wanted to correct his response for a better answer, before he decided against it. The smile on Hunk’s face was worth keeping his mouth shut. The two were quiet for a little while longer.

“Baking and cooking help with my anxiety.” Keith looked up in surprise at Hunk’s response. The bigger teen continued to look at the oven with the same smile as before. “I get really anxious and nervous about a lot of things. Crowds, piloting, schoolwork, life. I’ve had anxiety since I was little and it got really bad a few years before the Garrison. But my mom took me with her to a cooking class, and I learned that’s it’s therapeutic for people like me.” Hunk’s smile never faltered, even as his voice softened.

“I usually stress bake and cook. When my anxiety’s really bad, I make a whole meal and lots of cookies. Lance always appreciate that.” Hunk chuckled and even Keith found himself smiling at that. “It helps to calm my nerves and keeps me busy so I don’t hurt myself with stress and anxiety.”

“I never knew.” Keith whispered.

“Not a lot of people do.” Hunk shrugged. The two settled into a comfortable silence once more until the timer on the oven went off. Hunk proudly handed the oven mitts to Keith, who took the space cake out of the oven with a look of awe. Hunk chuckled and wrapped an arm around Keith in a small hug.

He won’t hurt you.

“We all having different ways of dealing with problems. I’m not saying that yours is baking, but we could try to find out what it is?”

Keith’s smile nearly blinded Hunk. “I think I’d like that.”

“The crystal’s been removed. We’ve lost all control on that ship.”

Zarkon never looked away from the window he was looking out, into the deep crevasses of space. His arms were folded behind his back and his shoulders were squared when Haggar moved silently by his side.

“We’ll need to create another if we –”

“There is no need.” Zarkon interrupted before turning away from the window. Haggar bit back a snarl but followed her commander and leader. “I’ve gathered all the information that I need.”

“And what would that be?” Haggar hissed. Zarkon ignored the tone in Haggar’s voice in favor of looking down at the small, black bayard that he began twisting in his hands. Slowly, a sly grin crept onto his face.

“Voltron has a weakness that we can exploit and I intend to use it.” Zarkon explained vaguely. Haggar frowned.

“Their weakness lies within that red pilot. He, alone, will cause the downfall and the destruction of Voltron.” Zarkon explained and slowly Haggar could see his plan beginning to take action. Her lips curled into a cruel smile. Zarkon’s eyes glowered once he stepped into the shadows.

“I don’t just intend to break him. I will *destroy* him.”

Shiro sighed to himself as he listened to Keith’s muffled sobs through the door for the tenth time that week. Every night since Keith had awoken from his injuries, Shiro and the others would find themselves waiting outside Keith’s locked door, listening to his screams and sobs through the door. However, as time wore on Shiro had requested that the others go to be immediately if Keith didn’t open the door and lately, Shiro was the only one left.

Still, Keith never opened the door.

He knew that Keith was slowly (*slowly, ever so slowly*) getting better but he still wasn’t back to the way he was. Keith still flinched more often than not when someone got too close in his space, he still cried *every single night* from nightmares. Keith still was hesitant to spar with anyone, especially Shiro. He still often stared off into space with eyes too wide and mouth shut tight.

The team hadn’t even formed Voltron since the ‘incident’ with Keith.

Shiro leaned his head against the door, feeling his heart crack with every single sob coming from Keith’s room. He couldn’t help but feel useless when his teammate, his *friend*, was hurting. Hurting so badly.

“Keith...please...” Shiro knew his efforts were a waste and it would be another sleepless night, where Shiro would wait until Keith cried himself to sleep before lying awake in his own bed. Unable to sleep out of stress and worry.

However, to Shiro’s surprise, the door slid open, causing him to nearly face plant into

Keith's room. Luckily, Shiro's sense of balance was better than most and he managed to catch himself upright.

Shiro squinted in the darkness of Keith's room, allowing his eyes to adjust. He spotted the younger teen, curled up on the edge of his bed with his covers wrapped tightly around his body and his shoulders shaking with quiet sobs. Shiro felt his chest constrict at the sight.

Oh Keith.

"Keith?" Keith didn't acknowledge Shiro, nor did he move, and Shiro took that as a sign to come closer. Gently, he placed himself on the edge of the bed while still giving Keith some space. "Hey buddy, what's going on? Is there anything I can do for you?"

Shiro felt his heart breaking at Keith's muffled sobs and the way that Keith curled into himself even further. His metallic arm raised in hesitation to comfort the boy, but upon seeing the faded scarred skin on Keith's neck, he dropped his hand.

"I see them everywhere."

Shiro felt his heart lurch into his throat when Keith spoke up. His voice was cracking and muffled with sobs and, he never raised his head up but Shiro was thankful to hear his voice again.

"You mean, the robot versions of us?" Shiro asked softly. Keith's shoulders shook harder.

"I see them when I close my eyes and when they're open. I can't – I can't tell if it's them or you anymore. I can't – I can't –"

"You can't distinguish reality from your nightmares." Shiro stated rather than asked. His response seemed to get Keith's attention in the form of a louder sob. Slowly, Keith raised his head up and Shiro's throat tightened at the redness of Keith's eyes and the tears spilling over his cheeks.

"Y-Yeah?" Keith sniffled. Shiro tried to smile gently and he offered the edge of the blanket to Keith to wipe his eyes. "How did you know?"

"Because it happens to me sometimes." Shiro admitted softly. He was secretly glad that Keith had yet to pull away from Shiro. "Sometimes when I look at you I see the face of a Galra soldier. Or when I'm talking to Allura, her face suddenly morphs into Haggar's." Keith's eyes widened but his tears stopped falling by now. *That was a start.*

"Sometimes when I'm walking alone, I feel like I'm still on that Galra ship and a prisoner." Shiro said even quieter than before. Keith swallowed and leaned into Shiro's touch, still a bit hesitantly.

"I didn't realize – Shiro – I..." Keith stumbled over his words, only to have Shiro chuckle tiredly.

"It's okay. It's not something I really talk about. But, I probably should." Shiro shrugged. Keith frowned to himself.

"How – How do you get over it? Your attacks?" He licked his lips nervously, hoping that Shiro didn't realize what he was really asking. Thankfully, Shiro just smiled.

"I think about you guys." Keith blinked in confusion. "I think about your faces and our time as team Voltron, and slowly your faces come back to me. That's when I realize that this is real *now*. Not the Galra ship. Not being prisoner. But us; you." Shiro admitted and Keith felt his heart

jerk. “I remember that even if I can’t see you guys or hear you, I know you’ll be there for me and you guys can bring me back.”

Keith’s throat tightened and the words he wanted to say died on his lips.

“Keith, I know we’re not perfect. Hell, our team is actually pretty unstable.” Shiro said gently, watching as Keith looked more and more conflicted. “But you know we’re here for you. We consider you as family now, and once you’re family, there’s no going back.”

Keith laughed watery and pushed forward until he had buried himself into Shiro’s arms. Shiro was momentarily surprised at Keith’s but he was quick to wrap his arms around Keith and stroke his arms up and down his back.

“I’m scared Shiro.” Keith admitted weakly. Shiro wished nothing more than he could take away all of Keith’s pain and fears away, but all he could do was comfort him when he needed it. “I’m so scared.”

“Of what?”

“What if I am weak?” Before Shiro could argue, Keith was speaking once more. “What if I can’t actually beat it? What if – what if something bad does happen, and you’re not you. If – if it ever came to it, I don’t know if I could stop you guys. If I had to fight you, I – I’m so scared that I won’t be able to. That I’ll be weak.”

“Keith,” Shiro pushed Keith’s chin up, while brushing back his tears. “Keith, you’re not weak for that. It takes a lot of courage and a lot of heart to love some one that much. And between you and me, I’m the same way. I know it would *kill* me if I had to try to kill you guys. But sometimes, doing what’s right isn’t the easiest thing to do.” Keith sniffed pitifully.

“But I don’t believe we’ll ever have to worry about that.” Shiro admitted while Keith smiled weakly. “Because we’ll always be together, no matter what. So don’t worry about that.”

For a few more moments the two sat in a comfortable silence as Keith calmed himself down.

“Shiro?”

“Yeah?”

“Thank you for this.”

“Anytime Keith.”

“Shiro?”

“Yeah?”

“Can we not tell Lance about this?”

“...Of course Keith.”

x.x.V.x.x

It was finally peaceful and nothing was going wrong.

Or so they thought.

Everyone jumped at the sound of an alarm blaring and Allura sprang into action first. His eyes widened at the image of a familiar ship on screen before her face hardened.

“Zarkon is coming.”

x.x.V.x.x

I don't want to let you in, because I'm afraid to lose you.

Chapter End Notes

Phew, chapter 2 is done. And it's just as long as chapter 1! I'm spoiling you guys so you better relish in it. So I had an exam for a class on Monday, hence why I did nothing over the weekend. But I took my exam, AND THEN...I ate lunch. That took a lot out of me. Then I went and wrote up about 4K to this chapter and finished it today after a walk with my pupper! I hope you're enjoying it so far, because I have so much planned. So, so much. And the team bonding mixed with the angst. Ugh, yes. Anyhow, thank all for your lovely support and taking the time to read this fic. As I said earlier, I am always up for comments and kudos and Keith could use some love, amirite??

Thanks and peaceout!

Who is in Control?

Chapter Notes

Guess what time it is? Guess what time it is? Shit, I am super excited and nervous for this chapter. I think it's in my top 3 favorite chapters for this fic. Once I got going I couldn't stop. Once again, you guys are so, so amazing and I appreciate each and every one of you with all of my hearts. Your kudos and comments always make me so happy and I love them! Thank you so much to everyone one of you reading and supporting this little fic.

Anyhow it's time for you to read this next little chapter. I've hope to make some of you cry but we'll see...

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I don't know why this is happening to me.

Why won't you help me?

x.x.V.x.x

“How did Zarkon even find us? We’ve been hiding out for weeks?” Pidge hissed, trying to keep their voice from raising too high from worry. They looked at the rest of their team, noticing the uneasy look in all of their eyes, especially Shiro. Shiro’s jaw tightened.

“I am unsure. I suppose our luck has just run out.” Allura said with a snarl, as she began to sift through the controls of the ship. Coran was already on watch, locating the approximate position of Zarkon’s ship and how many ships were following. Zarkon is looking for a fight with Voltron.”

“We’re in no condition to fight.” Shiro put in with a tight-lipped frown. Allura grimaced at his respond but offered no response, while the others just looked confused by this. Shiro usually was the last one to back down from a fight, if it meant protecting his team.

“Shiro, what are you talking about?” Keith spoke what was on everyone’s mind and Shiro felt his throat tighten.

Oh Keith.

“Keith, you’re still injured. There’s no way that –” Shiro began calmly, only to have Keith’s face morph into an expression of disbelief.

“Shiro, my injuries have all healed! I’m perfectly capable of piloting Red, just look at me!” Keith argued. *I do look at you Keith; I look at you every day and all I can see is how I’ve failed you.* The faded, pink scars on Keith’s neck normally were hidden by his t-shirts and by the angle of the light. However, right now against the stark white of his suit, Keith’s scars never looked so bright and Shiro unconsciously brought his finger to rub his own scar.

“Exactly! Look at you, have you seen your neck Keith?” Lance interrupted before Shiro could try to argue with Keith. Keith’s eyes momentarily widened and his hand brushed against the

scars on his neck, before his face darkened.

“Of course I have, Lance. I have to see them, *every time I look in a mirror!*” Keith snarled. Normally, Shiro would enjoy the bantering back and forth between Lance and Keith, while attempting to take the adult route, but he knew this argument would become more personal. *Too personal.*

“Keith, enough. Lance is just worried. We all are.” Shiro intervened and placed himself in between Keith and Lance, who were both glaring the other down. Lance puffed his chest out before folding his arms over his chest and angrily turning away from Keith. Keith clenched his hands into fists.

“I’m not – I’m not incapable of flying.” Keith argued and his voice momentarily cracked. Shiro felt his face soften in realization, while Lance seemed to understand Keith’s argument. He swallowed and dropped his arms from across his chest.

“Keith, buddy...” Lance trailed off, unsure of how to properly approach the subject. He could see Keith shaking with an internal struggle, that he seemed to be aware of more and more these days.

“Keith, nobody thinks you’re an incapable pilot.” Shiro murmured while placing a hand on Keith’s shoulder in a soothing manner. The fact that Keith didn’t flinch away like most days, proved to Shiro how far he had come since the “incident” in the training room.

“Yeah, besides Shiro, you’re probably the *most* capable and best pilot out of us. We’d trust you any day.” Hunk decided to add quietly. Keith swallowed, pushing back the burning in his eyes to look at Hunk in trust. Though there was no hint of sarcasm (Keith loathed to admit he didn’t pick up on sarcasm easily) or malice in his voice, Keith could see the underlying *honesty* in Hunk’s eyes and in his warm smile.

“Hunk’s right man, you’re an amazing pilot.” Pidge added with a small smile of their own. “Everyone’s just scared because you’re finally healed (*physically*) and we all remember the last time we fought Zarkon.”

Everyone shuddered at the memory.

Shiro’s side still sometimes burned from where Haggar’s lightning had hit him.

Keith’s lion still remembered the terrible fight against Zarkon.

The fight he almost lost.

“We almost lost you, and we can’t lose you.” Lance finally spoke up, voice barely above a whisper. Keith was still too stunned by everyone’s proclamations in order to properly respond. Thankfully, no one was looking for a direct response from him and he ducked his head.

There was an uncomfortable silence following Lance’s words.

Keith took a deep breath.

“If you...If you guys trust me, like I do...if you think of me like, like that...then you have to let me fight.” Keith finally said. He could feel the tension rising in the air, but no one decided to verbally voice their thoughts and emotions. He took that as a cue to go on, by finally looking up with a night light burning in his eyes.

“If you guys trust me, then you have to understand that forming Voltron is the *only* chance at defeating Zarkon.” Keith continue, noticing the pained and conflicting emotions in his teams – *his family’s* eyes. “You must know that apart we are weaker. We’re stronger. Together.”

Shiro couldn’t stop the guilt bubbling in his gut, but chose to ignore it in favor of clasping a hand on Keith’s shoulder.

“Together.” He finally said.

Keith smiled.

“Together.”

Keith’s smile never once faulted upon the response from the rest of his teammates and everyone gathered to their ships to face Zarkon once more.

Please let this time be different.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith couldn’t understand why his heart was beating as fast and as hard as it was as soon as he entered the Red Lion. Awakening the lion for its rest and turning the ship on, Keith could see his own hands shaking and he swallowed painfully.

There’s nothing to be afraid of.

Nothing will happen.

“Zarkon’s sending a smaller ship ahead of him, right towards our ship. No doubt that it’s a captain of his, trying to separate us and distract us.” Allura’s voice filled over the comm in Keith’s ears and he nearly jumped in his seat.

Gently, he could hear a soft purr coming from Red in what felt like a soothing manner. Secretly, Keith appreciated the gesture from Red and gave a soft pat to the controls. He whispered aa quick thanks so no one else could hear the shaking in his voice.

“He knows we won’t be able to fight both of them at once.” Shiro’s voice sounded more frustrated than usual and Keith felt the need to try and comfort him, but he couldn’t pick the right words to say. Instead, he said:

“They intend to separate us.”

He could hear pained growls coming from the other members of his family and Keith was relieved to see he wasn’t the only one upset.

“Allura, how are the ships’ proton shields and defense mechanisms?” Keith ignored the questions being shot at him from the others, while he maneuvered Red outside the ship. Looking around he noticed the Black Lion surrounded by the Blue, Yellow and Green, all set and ready to go.

“Thanks to Pidge and Coran our shields are up to similar performance as the Galra’s ships. We are still weaker, due to the Galra having an unlimited supply and control over the Galaxy. However, I have no doubt that we can easily hold our own against a Galra ship and canon.” Allura said without hesitation, causing Keith to smile.

“That’s good.”

“Keith, if you don’t mind me interrupting, yes, why exactly is that good?” Hunk managed to ask over their comm and Keith could see all of the other lions looking at him and Red. He turned Red around to face the oncoming Galra ship heading in their direction.

“Because we’re going to split up.”

“*WHAT?!*” Keith winced at the volume of everyone’s shouts at once, including Shiro. He grumbled while rubbing his ears.

“Keith, you cannot be serious. *You* were the one who said we are stronger together.” Pidge hissed and Keith could just picture their face of fury in his mind. He chuckled momentarily.

“Yes, I did.”

Shiro sighed out of frustration. “Keith, now is really not the time for jokes.”

“I’m being serious Shiro.” Keith replied quickly as the ship came closer and closer. “When I mean split up, I don’t mean Voltron. I mean we are going to split up from Allura and the ship. She will fight the captain’s ship headed our way and we should head straight for Zarkon.”

Keith could hear the strangled gasps from everyone else.

“Keith, you sly do, you are absolutely *crazy!*” Lance’s voice started out humorous, but soon became hysterical at the end. Keith frowned at this. “Do you not remember what happened last time we tried to face Zarkon?”

“What choice do we have?” Keith shot back. “*We* are the only ones who even stands a chance at facing him and we have to try!”

“Keith, I know you want to defeat Zarkon, just as every single soul here does, but we cannot just jump into this head first.” Shiro said and Keith growled.

“Don’t you guys want to know *how* he keeps finding us? Don’t you want to know how he always seems to be one step behind us? If we keep running, nothing will happen, except that Zarkon will destroy more and more planets!” Keith yelled, gripped onto the controls tightly. He could feel a heavy weight settling on his chest, every time that one of the Voltron team members began arguing with him, instead of *listening*.

They will abandon you.

“Or he’ll destroy us!”

You will always be alone.

“Keith is right.”

They will never trust you –

“Huh?” Even Keith was stumped by Hunk’s proclamation.

“As much as I would rather run away and hide, while shimmying through a worm hole, he’s right.” Despite the obvious fear in his words, Hunk’s voice sounded calm and collected and Keith wanted to praise the other teen. However, he chose to keep quiet and listen, while hoping the others would do the same. “Zarkon *keeps* finding us. Maybe we can’t defeat him today and maybe

we're not ready – actually I'm like 98 percent sure that we're not ready, but that's beside the point – but we need some answers. I agree with Keith that Voltron should follow Zarkon. Get some answers.”

“Hunk, man...” Lance was stunned into silence.

“I agree.” Keith bit back the urge to grin at Pidge's agreement. His heart was still hammering and voices were still whispering in his head, but he was starting to feel like himself. “We need answers and running is only going to raise more questions. If we get into trouble, we'll pull back and Allura can open a worm hole.”

Keith chewed his lip when there was a silence over the comm.

“I'm in. I've got nothing else scheduled until Friday, so kicking some Galra ass is good with me.” Lance finally sighed and Keith would swear he could hear the grin in his voice. However, his relief was short-lived when Shiro had still yet to answer.

“Shiro?”

“...Looks like you're the captain here, Keith.” Shiro's voice finally filled Keith's ears and he held his breath. There wasn't any judgement or malice coming from Shiro but Keith still hesitated. “And a team always follows their captain, without hesitation.”

Keith was more than a little thankful that no one could see how bright his face burned at this.

“Hey, let me just say, that if we're picking Keith as our new leader, then I choose the title of Supreme Leader of the Saviors of the World.” Keith felt his eye twitch when the moment was ruined by Lance and he huffed a sigh.

“Well if we're all switching it up here, then can I be the head of Voltron, instead of the leg? I think I'd make a good head.” Hunk piped in eagerly and for a moment, Keith wondered just what was wrong with his teammates. He almost considered ejecting himself out of Red.

“No Hunk, you'd be a terrible head. Yellow has too much mass, if anything it should be me. After all, my intellect outweighs all of you here.” Pidge scoffed, causing Hunk to squeak in response. “And Lance, I'd rather orbit Kerberos for the rest of my life than refer to you as that.”

“How dare you!”

“Pidge, I think I really deserve to be a head.”

“No one is changing to anything.” Shiro's leader-like voice was firm and well heard over the comm devices. For a moment, Keith smiled in relief.

“Besides, we all know the best pilot belongs in the head. So there's no reason for me to change with anyone.”

Keith face palmed.

Thankfully (*Keith never thought he'd say this*) the Galra ship was right upon the lions and Allura's ship before firing a shot at the group of lions. Quickly, Keith moved his lion out of range with the others easily following in suit. He saw the shield power up and build itself over Allura's ship and he grinned.

“We’ll handle these guys. You guys take on Zarkon.” Allura said in determination and everyone else yelled in response.

“Alright, everyone. Let’s destroy some Galra once and for all.” Shiro commanded and his entire team yelled in acceptance. The five lions raced around the captain’s ship, easily avoiding any and all blasts being shot their way. Without looking, Keith knew that Allura and Coran were fine by the sounds of their own weapons firing off against the Galra ship.

The faster that the lions traveled, the closer Zarkon’s ship came into view.

It was just as large and terrifying as everyone had remembered, and chills were sent down everyone’s spines.

“Alright team. We attack the ship on our own; weaken the defenses before forming Voltron. We form to draw Zarkon out or if anything goes wrong.” Shiro commanded to his team with narrowed eyes.

“Yes!”

“Hunk, you and Lance take out their cannons and try to dismantle the shields. We need the big guns out for this.” Shiro continued and avoided a blaster aimed in his direction. His hands never shook, nor did his eyes hesitate despite being shot at. Besides him he could feel the rest of his team flying in similar fashions.

“Aye!” Lance and Hunk grunted, before taking off to the left and diving towards the heavy artillery of the ship. Shiro smirked.

“Pidge, I want you and I to maneuver into Zarkon’s ship from below. It’s time we find out how Zarkon’s finding us.”

“Yes!” Pidge answered before peeling off underneath Shiro.

“Keith, keep our backs covered. I want you to take out as many fighter ships header our way. You’re the fastest out of all of us. Keep them away from all of us.” Shiro finished in his command as he dipped Black after the Green Lion. He heard an affirmative grunt from Keith and soon the Red Lion was barreling towards a fleet of fighter ships at unimaginable speeds.

Shiro smiled proudly for a moment, before replacing his expression with one of complete concentration and following after Pidge.

“All right big guy, you know what to do! That cannon’s all yours!” Lance laughed before spinning Blue right towards and artillery gun firing at him. The lasers practically *bounced* off Blue; they were so flimsy.

“Ten-four!” Hunk grinned and pushed Yellow to increase speed. His lion changed angle at the last second and instead slammed into a set of artillery guns beside the cannon. The lion proceeded to open its mouth with a might roar, before ripping the guns out with its mouth and hurdling them into space, towards a small group of fighter pilots.

“Thanks big man.” Keith smirked when he maneuvered Red easily through a valley of asteroids. His lion easily danced off the edges of asteroids and maneuvered in between them, but the Galra following him were not so lucky. Several dozen found themselves slamming into the surface of the asteroids or one another, before exploding upon impact. Keith’s eyes sparkled under the red glow of the explosions.

He caught sight of another fleet moving away from him, while Red crouched on a larger asteroid, heading straight for Lance.

“No, you don’t.” Keith hissed, before shoving Red into full speed, feeling his adrenaline pumping and his heart racing. As his blood boiled and his anger rose, he felt a familiar energy building on top of Red’s back. A sly grin overcame his face when a proton cannon finished forming on Red, and Keith stopped Red on another asteroid before shouting loudly.

A bright blue beam erupted from the cannon on his back and shot straight through the fleet of Galra fighter pilots and even burst straight through Zarkon’s ship, leaving a gaping hole in its place.

Keith laughed when Blue turned to face him and he could only imagine Lance’s face in that moment.

“Keith, holy shit! Was that you, what the fuck? How did you do that?! Holy shit.” Lance practically screeched over their comm and Keith couldn’t help but laugh.

“Lance, watch your fucking language.” Shiro scowled and Keith had to hold back a snicker.

“What? What did Keith do? What’d I miss?” Hunk whined.

“Just Keith being Keith.” Pidge supplied.

“Right.” Keith chuckled and soon he was pushing Red off the asteroid to follow after a new fleet of Galra fighter pilots. He easily maneuvered around their lasers and blasters before pushing Red’s throttle forward and zooming towards the fleet.

You’re not getting away from me.

“Seriously, Lance, what did I miss?” Hunk asked, while Yellow turned a Galra artillery gun towards the cannon’s shield. He smirked at the sound of the metal crunching, and the lasers beginning to fire at their own shield. If their weapons couldn’t drop the shields, then surely the Galra’s own weapons could. To Hunk’s amusement, the shield began to break particle by particle at each impact from the artillery gun.

“Keith, holy shit, Hunk, Keith has a *cannon!*”

“What? I thought he had a sword?” Hunk grunted when another artillery cannon blasted against yellow’s side. With a mighty roar, the lion raced across the ships outside, destroying layers of the ship on the outside, underneath its metal paws. Snarling, the lion tore into the gun and repositioned it to also fire at the cannon’s shield.

“He does! But apparently he has a *freakin’ cannon* on his back! *Dios mío!*” Lance shouted over the comm devices and Hunk gawked from his position inside his own lion.

“Are you serious?! Do we all have cannons? I have a heavy laser gun, can that turn into a cannon too? Keith, how did you do that?” Hunk yelled excitedly, when the cannon’s outer shield finally was smashed and destroyed. However, this caused the cannon to power up and start firing. “Yikes!”

“I got angry.” Keith grunted in answer to Hunk’s question while he tried to maneuver around a particularly fast group of fighter pilot’s intent on following him. He couldn’t stop to take aim with his cannon, so that was practically useless.

“Just like yourself.”

Keith nearly drove Red into an asteroid in front of him, but luckily the lion caught on its paladin's sudden loss of concentration and dived down at the last second. Most of the fleet were not as quick or as flexible as Red and smashed straight into the asteroid.

Keith's hands were gripping onto the controls of Red, so tightly that they were aching. His eyes had widened as he frantically maneuvered Red through space.

That voice was not like the others he had heard before.

He didn't know whose voice this was.

“Did anyone else hear that?” Keith shakily asked, once Red was safe and a distance from the Galra ship. His heart would not stop racing as his eyes scanned across the scene before him.

“Hear what? Something going on, Keith?” Lance asked while his lion tore apart a defensive shield on Zarkon's ship.

“You're worthless. Hearing voices in your head. They'll think you're unstable.”

“...Nothing. Never mind.” Keith whispered quietly as he pushed Red to aid Lance. At first he was worried about why Zarkon had yet to make an appearance as he had before, but now he had to worry about new voices in his head (*there's always voices; they never, never go away*).

“We've got bigger problems guys.” Shiro's voice cut through Keith's thoughts. He blinked when the Green and Black Lions suddenly popped out from under the ship, flying at full speed. For a moment, he was confused until he could feel a rumbling in Red.

“Turns out that Shiro and I weren't supposed to touch the ship. That was a big no, no.” Pidge added frantically. “We need to form Voltron, like *now!*”

Keith watched as Lance and Hunk both had their lions jump away from the shaking Galra ship, before flying beside the others. Keith watched in horror as a long, slimy and blue tentacle popped out from where Shiro and Pidge had flown from, as another tentacle followed and another.

“They'll think you're incapable. Once my creation destroys you.”

Keith grit his teeth in unbearable pain at the pressure in his head, when the voice spoke and even Red whined in anxiousness.

“This is Haggar's monster. She created it.” Keith bit out through the pain, barely able to keep his hand from shaking. Red backed away from the slimy, monster that crawled out from underneath Zarkon's ship. Its red eyes had no pupil and were impossibly wide against his smushed face. The monster screeched and Keith's headache worsened.

“How are you so sure, Keith?” Lance asked nervously.

“I've sent them all. All of them to kill you. This time, I won't fail.”

Keith winced painfully. “She's the one who has been sending all the monsters to us. She *made* them all.”

“Keith...” Shiro started, only to stop himself when the monster threw one tentacle in their direction. The team of lions broke off to avoid being hit and the monster screeched again.

“We need to form Voltron!” Pidge shouted. Keith winced and closed his eyes in pain. However, upon closing his eyes, there were still images lingering in front of his eyes.

“You will kill them. You will lead them to their death.”

Keith was horrified to realize that the images racing across his were of his teammates.

Dead.

Keith’s eyes snapped open, but no matter where he looked or where he turned the images of his teammates lying dead and mangled at his feet were still there.

“You will be the death of them.”

Keith bit back a scream when Pidge’s head rolled across the bloody floor of Red, with eyes staring wide open into nothing. His hands let go of the controls and Red whined, when it tried to avoid a tentacle coming straight at it and its paladin.

“You will never be strong enough for them.”

Keith stumbled backwards and away from the slumped torso that belonged to Lance. His mouth was still open, dripping blood, in a forever silent scream. Keith’s throat clenched and his heart stopped. The monster shot out another tentacle, this time wrapping itself around Red. The lion roared for its paladin to awake from his nightmare.

“Keith! Keith, we need to form Voltron!”

“They will all burn and you will be left to watch.”

Hunk sat slumped against the wall of Red with eyes gouged out and teeth stained red. Keith covered his mouth and bit down on his hand, hard enough to draw blood. His eyes frantically searched everywhere to find an escape from this nightmare.

But none would come.

“Keith? Keith, we need you to form Voltron! I know you can beat this!”

“You will be their murderer.”

Keith nearly did scream this time, when he saw Shiro slumped against his chair. His eyes were unseeing and staring soullessly at Keith, while his mouth dripped blood. Keith’s eyes shakily traveled from Shiro’s head to the gaping hole in Shiro’s chest where his heart had once been. Keith’s eyes widened and he slowly looked down to his right arm which was slightly stretched in front of him.

To his horror, Keith’s hand was covered in blood.

Shiro’s blood.

“NO!”

“Keith?! Keith what’s happening?”

Just like that, the images of his teammates’ deaths were gone. The floor and walls were no longer covered in blood, his teammates’ bodies were no longer mangled and strewn across the cabin. And when Keith looked down, his hand was clean with only a dribble of blood where he bit

himself.

His heart was beating far too wildly and his breathing was too labored. He knew that the others could hear him over the comm but at the moment he didn't care. In quick realization, he heard Red roar and the entire ship jerked when the monster tried to crush them. Keith was like lightening back to his seat, before thrusting Red out of the slippery grip of the monster.

"I-Illusions. Haggar might try – be careful!" Keith's eyes widened in realization and he was quick to warn his teammates before seeking safety. "Haggar's trying to play tricks – b-be careful!"

"Keith..." Shiro swallowed painfully, having heard Keith's screams and heavy breathing. He could feel his blood beginning to boil and his eyes darkening at the thought of Haggar hurting Keith further. His mind was slowly emptying of anything other than forming Voltron and destroying that monster (*the one inside Zarkon's ship, not the one they're fighting*).

"W-We need to form Voltron. Beat this monster." Keith swallowed thickly and pushed back his terror. He heard the others hesitantly agreeing, but it was enough. With a new determination, the team could feel themselves begin to form Voltron and pull together.

They were becoming one.

"Hey, wouldn't this be cool if forming Voltron looked like an anime montage?"

"*Lance!*"

"Right, focus. Sorry."

Once Voltron was formed, the entire team felt stronger than ever. Even Keith. He grinned, forgetting about the illusions from earlier, and knew his family was grinning right beside him. Locking his bayard into Red, he watched as the large sword and shield were formed for Voltron.

"Let's destroy this monster!"

It was much easier to fight the monster once they had formed Voltron, that it almost felt too easy. Keith worried about how easy it was chopping off the monster's tentacles and overpowering it. And it seemed he was right to worry.

No one noticed the beam headed straight for Voltron's right arm.

The Red Lion.

Keith only had a second before a searing pain was immobilizing him and he was suddenly ejected straight out of Red. He tried to cry out but found he couldn't even speak when his body floated out of Red and into the vast and empty pits of space. He could only watch in horror as the beam dragged Keith further and further away from Voltron

Away from his family.

x.x.V.x.x

"*Keith! Keith!*" Keith's heart was in his chest and his eyes were so wide that he was sure

you could see all the whites to them. His arms flailed weakly, desperately trying to reach the Voltron, who fought with a limp right arm in front of Zarkon's ship.

He was screaming in the inside. Screaming and screaming.

"G-Get R-Red out!"

"Keith, hold on. We're coming your way! Just hold on." Shiro's voice was cracking with an emotion that Keith had *never* heard before and it tore another crack in Keith's heart. Without being able to move his head, Keith could barely see Voltron fighting against the slimy, wet monster who could breathe in space. His heart lurched when the monster slammed a tentacle down onto Red.

Red's in trouble.

Voltron's in trouble.

His family was in trouble.

"Allura..."

"Keith, Coran and I are projecting our beams towards you. Just hold on a few more minutes." Allura cut Keith off with a pained gasp. Keith weakly shook his head, feeling his bones grow heavier and heavier, and his limbs were working less and less in his favor. He knew it was only a matter of time before Zarkon's ship had him inside.

Why him, why not Voltron?

"No, Allura...open a worm hole...get...get Voltron out...please..." Keith whispered brokenly over the comm. He swore he could hear a ragged sob following this statement (*why did they cry*).

"No, Keith, no!"

"Please...can't let...Zarkon...get Voltron...please..." Keith whispered, feeling his eyes grow heavier and heavier as he was pulled closer to the ship. He watched as Voltron's actions became more and more feral, just desperately trying to get past the monster in front of them (*not even trying to kill it*). Keith felt tears gathering in the corners of his eyes.

He didn't want to go.

Not now.

"Please Allura..." Keith whispered and another sob tore over the comm, followed by another and another. He painfully, struggled to keep his eyes open. He blearily saw Allura's castle and Voltron still fighting against the grotesque monster in front of them. The silence over the comm were almost unbearable and for a moment, Keith thought no one had heard him.

"We'll come back Keith. Please hold on for us." Keith nearly cried with relief when he heard Allura's voice. He then wearily heard several shouts and screams over the comm, but the voices were growing dimmer and dimmer with every second.

Keith didn't know how much longer he could hold on.

"Allura, what are you saying?!"

“No! No you can’t do this, Allura, don’t you dare!”

“No, Keith! No, no! Keith!”

Weakly, Keith could see Voltron struggling against *itself*, rather than the monster. He choked on a sob, but found himself smiling when there was a familiar blue energy appearing behind Voltron.

“Please don’t do this! Keith!”

“Keith!”

Keith could feel his eyes closing and his body becoming entirely numb. The last thing he saw before falling into a familiar darkness, was Voltron being pulled into a worm hole, Red still hanging limply at its side.

Then there was no more.

“KEITH!”

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro clutched his head in his hands between his knees. He couldn’t bring himself to speak, nor move after what had just happened. He could feel his hands shaking over his head, and yet he couldn’t feel anything.

He was numb.

After being forcibly dragged through the worm hole, Voltron had immediately been dismantled and pulled alongside Allura’s ship. Somehow, Shiro found himself curled up on the floor with his helmet missing (*someone must have thrown it across the room*), curled up against a wall.

Nothing but the sounds of sobs filled the comm that lay at the other side of the control panel in the Black Lion. Even Black was silent, as if it knew what had just occurred.

What had just been lost.

Shiro’s eyes strained against the cold ground before him.

“We have to go back! We have to save him!” Shiro couldn’t even bring himself to look up, upon hearing Pidge’s screams over the comm.

No one answered.

“Shiro, we have to go back!”

Pidge was right. They had to go back. They had to save Keith from Zarkon. Right? Wasn’t that...wasn’t that the code of Voltron? Still Shiro was unable to move from his spot, even so much as to lift his head up. He could still feel the energy of Allura’s ship pulling them through a worm hole (*how far would it take them; how far would Keith be from them?*).

“Shiro!”

The first movement that Shiro made in nearly twenty minutes was to curl his right hand into a fist, until it began to glow a bright purple. His face morphed into a snarl and he smashed his

robotic fist against his discarded helmet (*how did he get across the room?*) and Black was once again filled with silence.

Shiro's breathing became heavy and unnatural, as his hand glowed at his side while his other formed a similar fist. His eyes darted back and forth throughout Black, similar to a wild animal.

How could he let this happen? Shiro wanted to die before having any member of his team go through the hell that he went through with Zarkon. And he couldn't even remember it all. All he could remember was the *torture* and the *pain*. So much pain.

Shiro let out a scream and slammed his fist into the control panel of Black. However, a sudden barrier fell over the controls and caused Shiro to jerk back. As he lay on the floor, clutching at his ears, a loud roaring filled his head; vibrating the walls of his skull and black. He cried out weakly against the roaring and curled up. Slowly, the roaring dulled until it was a soft sound of comfort.

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." Shiro choked, before the first set of tears in over a year ran down his cheeks and dripped on the floor underneath him.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith hated to admit but he was *terrified* to open his eyes. Unlike what most people would think, Keith could remember everything that had happened. The illusions. Forming Voltron. Fighting that monster. Being dragged out into space. Watching Voltron and Allura vanish through a worm hole.

Then nothing.

However, he opened his eyes to notice that he was looking right up at the stars. Blinking a few times, Keith was still met with the same sight. He slowly tested his limbs. While they were still heavy and quite weak, he was surprised to find that they were not tied up, as he would have expected as prisoner. Upon moving, Keith froze when he heard the sound of voices across the room.

He held his breath in hopes that they did not realize that he had awoken. But his prayers weren't to be answered today.

"It seems our *prisoner* has awoken my lord." Keith's blood ran cold like ice in his veins at the sound of Haggar's voice behind him. The same voice that had invaded his head and filled it with nightmares. The same voice that tormented him.

"Is he now?" Keith would also recognize Zarkon's voice anywhere and he was pleasantly surprised to find that it did not give him the same chills as Haggar. Keith immediately turned over on his side, to see Haggar and Zarkon both standing a few feet away from him. Despite the immense fear he was feeling, Keith shoved that down and glared at the two vile monsters in front of him.

"Zarkon." He snarled, lips curling and fingers clenching. Zarkon merely looked amused while Haggar's lips curled into a snarl.

"You even look like a Galra soldier." Was all Zarkon said, much to Keith's confusion. His eyes were trained on Zarkon's form as Zarkon walked around him, inspecting him like a piece of meat for sale. Haggar remained where she was with her head bowed and lips still curled. Keith's

nose scrunched from his own snarl.

“Impressive. I never would have believed Haggar, should I not have seen you with my own eyes.” Zarkon murmured while still walking around Keith. Keith swallowed thickly, eyes trained on the identical scars running along Zarkon’s face and his stomach twisted.

Keith remained quiet. No matter how much he wanted to tear Zarkon’s head from his shoulders or spit in his face, he figured that would only make matters worse for him.

“What? No response? Normally, you are quick to say something from what I’ve heard.” Zarkon smirked but Keith remained silent, even when Zarkon slammed his boot onto Keith’s back. The air vanished from his chest, leaving him gagging for breath momentarily.

“You might think you’re strong now *paladin*, but I can assure you that I will tear that down. I will break you, until there is nothing but dust left of what you once were.” Zarkon snarled, grabbing the front of Keith’s shirt and pressing him up to Zarkon’s face. Keith winced upon staring straight into Zarkon’s glowing purple eyes (*so much like Shiro’s hand, why, oh why?*).

“I’ve broken that precious *leader* of yours, and you are *nothing* compared to him.” Zarkon snarled. Rather than being intimidated, Keith only felt a fury burning even brighter inside of him at the mention of Shiro, and his blood boiled.

“Don’t you dare talk about Shiro like that!” Keith snarled, spit flying into Zarkon’s face. Zarkon hissed and tightened his grip around Keith’s neck. Keith struggled but his temper never simmered down.

“You *will* learn your place in this empire, or else your friends will suffer a far worse fate than what Haggar showed you.” Zarkon warned and Keith’s temper only flared at this.

“You will never touch them!” He spat, kicking wildly in Zarkon’s hold. “You will never get Voltron and you will never defeat them!” He shouted, though Zarkon’s grin only widened at this statement. Keith could feel an uneasy pit bubbling in his stomach, but it was nothing compared to the blood boiling in his veins.

“Oh, but I won’t need to defeat them.” Zarkon chuckled; his laughter dug deep into Keith’s bones, causing him to shudder. Keith swallowed thickly, when Zarkon’s glowing eyes locked onto him and his own hand began to glow. “You will.”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith’s mind was hazy. He couldn’t tell what day it was anymore or where he was. Everything was just meshing together in his mind. It was as if he were on an onslaught of pain, torture, pain, hurt, experiments and pain. His mind was foggy and his senses were dulled by drugs and experiments.

He could tell there were other figures in the cell with him, but just lifting his head seemed to be too much of an effort.

“What is a Galra doing in a cell?”

“That’s not a Galra, look he has skin like the Champion’s companions.”

“But not completely. There’s some purple too.”

“Don’t touch him! They probably sent him to kill us.”

“Oh stop. Look at him, he’s so out of it that I doubt he even understands us talking about him.”

“U’der’t’nd you.” Keith mumbled hoarsely and soon the voices surrounding him became hushed. He was dimly aware of black shapes surrounding him and Keith’s mind was too far gone to realize the danger he could be in and how vulnerable he must appear.

“This doesn’t look like Galra armor.” The figure closest to his body murmured softly. Keith tried to roll his head over to look at the figure, but even that was too much effort (*it’s hard to move when you can’t feel*).

“It’s not prisoner garb either. What is it?” A figure on Keith’s other side, smaller than the other, replied and soon hands were rubbing against his suit and against the injuries along his body. Keith fought back the urge to cry out, but lost when a particular rough hand ran down his neck.

“Leave him alone!” The smaller blurred figure hissed and the hands were gone. Keith moaned (*hands, hands everywhere; itching and scratching*).

“Can you hear me son, are you awake?” The taller figure said from his right. Keith merely moaned in pain and from being disoriented. “Okay, what’s your name? Do you remember where you’re from?”

“K’t’h. E’rth.” Keith mumbled tiredly. He heard two identical gasps from either side of him and his throat tightened.

“Keith? Earth? You’re from Earth?” The smaller figure to his left whispered. Though, Keith couldn’t nod he attempted to answer the figure, as he recognized that these figures must also be from Earth (*who else was from Earth? Someone important, wasn’t it?*).

“Y’s.”

“W – When were you taken?” Keith could only moan, barely able to concentrate long enough from the pain to speak properly. “What the hell have they done to him?”

“Keith, do you remember anything that’s happened to you?” The older figure softly asked. Keith frowned and furrowed his brow in pain. “Listen, my name is Commander Holt and this is my son, Matt, we too are from Earth just like you. But we’re not sure –”

Keith felt his sluggish heart begin to speed up and his eyes struggled to open. The two figures were still blurry, but he could make out auburn spiked hair, familiar hazel eyes...

“Sh’ro. P’ge.” Keith rasped suddenly. “Shiro. Pidge.”

“Shiro?!” The smaller figure to his left (*Matt*) gasped in shock. “You know Shiro? Shiro’s alive?!” Keith could tell Matt was trembling and he managed a weak nod. The figure to Keith’s right (*Commander Holt*) also appeared shocked by the new information.

“Pidge? You know Pidge? How on Earth do you Pidge’s nickname?!” Commander Holt gasped and Keith frowned in confusion. Everything felt too meshed together. He couldn’t seem to differentiate anything anymore.

“Te’m. V’ltr’n. Lo’k f’r you.” Keith mumbled deliriously, feeling the room spin and his skin starting to burn. Everything was beginning to feel hot, too hot. Too hot.

“Voltron?! You know about –” Whatever Commander Holt was about to say, was cut off

by the sound of the prison door sliding open and light pouring into the room. Keith winced against the harsh light.

“What do you want?” Matt snarled.

“The newbie comes with us. It’s time to have some fun.”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith screamed when needles and knives prodded against his skin. He screamed and thrashed in agony, when they dug deep into his skin and scarred his arms. He tried thrashing, but it was impossible when he was strapped down to the metal table from all angles.

Every now and again, he could see his own reflection in the mirror above the table. Positioned right where he could see himself.

Bright yellow eyes and purple skin.

Sharpened teeth with long fangs.

Ears purple and covered in fur instead of hair.

“What have you done to me?! What have you done?!” Keith would scream over and over.

Zarkon would always laugh. “Nothing that you already aren’t. This is your true bloodline paladin. *You are a Galra.*”

Keith screamed.

x.x.V.x.x

Matt and Commander Holt were afraid to look at him as the weeks past and Keith’s skin color began to permanently change. They still talked to Keith, when Keith was coherent enough, and tried to gather as much information as they could.

But they were wary of him, and cautious. One of them always had their eyes on Keith, even when Keith had his back turned to them.

Keith snorted bitterly.

They should be scared of him.

He was a monster.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith dug his newly sharpened nails (*claws, they were sharper than knives*) into the sides of his face.

“Who do you serve?” Zarkon’s voice rang overhead, from nowhere and yet from everywhere. Keith sobbed, feeling the wet blood on his claws rubbing against his skin.

“What have you done?! What have you done?!” Keith screeched over and over, yellows eyes wide and animalistic. The doctor trembled in front of Keith, clearly locked in the room with the crazed, newly formed alien.

“I’ve only purged that rotten *other* DNA from your body. When I am finished with you, there will be nothing but Galra left in you. You will serve as the perfect Galra soldier to the empire.” Zarkon’s laugh dug into Keith’s skin like a jagged piece of laugh, and Keith’s screams turned into a vicious roar.

“This is what you always were, *paladin*, you cannot hide from your DNA!”

“What have you done?!”

Zarkon’s laughter rang in Keith’s ears as Keith reached towards the doctor with bloody hands.

“Whom do you serve?”

x.x.V.x.x

“*You’re a monster!*” Shiro’s face was one of horror and disgust as he backed away from Keith. Keith whimpered, feeling his claws scrape against his torn clothing, while Shiro continued to stumble backwards. “*S-Stay away from me! You monster!*”

“*Stop! You’re going to kill him, stop it!*” Pidge’s voice stopped Keith cold in his steps. Beside him, he looked towards the youngest and smallest member of his family, who had tears streaming down their faces and terror in their eyes. Beside them, Lance was protectively standing between them and Keith. Rather than terror, Lance’s face told the story of true disgust towards Keith.

“*You’re nothing but a filthy Galra. A traitor to this team! Get the hell away from us!*” Lance growled viciously and Keith felt a sob stifle in his throat.

“Lance, it’s me. It’s Keith.” He tried but was cut off at Lance snarl.

“*You’re a traitor. A despicable traitor.*”

“No Lance...”

Keith’s yellow eyes brimmed with tears and his head pounded at sight of his teammates. Behind him, he could hear Zarkon snorting with disgust.

“They will never accept you after this. You are one of us now and you *always* will be.”

“Whom do you serve?”

x.x.V.x.x

Commander Holt and Matt stopped asking him questions about Shiro, and Keith stopped acknowledging them.

He was glad too.

His memory was starting to get fuzzy.

He couldn’t remember the last time he saw Shiro.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith screamed himself hoarse when the helmet went on his head.

A blinding white pain overcame all his sense, and there were stars in his eyes so bright that he couldn't see anything else. His body was on fire and his blood was boiling underneath his skin.

He screamed.

He squirmed.

He cried.

“Whom do you serve?”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith barely saw as his clawed hand smashed through the chest of the enemy in front of him, leaving a gaping hole and blood dripping to the floor.

He pulled back his bloody claw and watched the light drain out of familiar grey eyes.

Keith wondered who this victim was.

x.x.V.x.x

“Whom do you serve?”

“...”

“I won't ask you again, *soldier*. Of whom, do you serve?”

“...Zarkon of the Galra Empire.”

Then Zarkon smiled.

x.x.V.x.x

Why won't you help me, when you know what is going to happen?

Chapter End Notes

Yes. I have hopped aboard the Keith is a Galra and alien train. All aboard! I love this HC so very much and if it doesn't become cannon I think I'll cry. There will be more in depth about Keith's DNA and parentage later in the fic and I've purposely left his other half of his DNA quiet for now. Maybe you can try to guess what it is? So originally I was going down a route that @klanced and @ehilhr created but it seems not anymore. I'm striving away from that full HC so if you've read that, good news: It won't spoil this fic! I'm going somewhere else with it.

Anyhow I do hope you all are enjoying the ride, as I've been spoiling you with lengthy chapters, but like I said, once I start I can't stop and the ideas keep coming. Which is great for you guys, huh? As always, comments are appreciate and loved like Lance loves his memes. Keep them coming and thanks for reading!

You can talk to me @lordofthebigtimesupernatural.

Thanks and peaceout!

My Mind's Like a Disease

Chapter Notes

EDIT: IMPORTANT NOTE PLEASE READ:

In regards to learning about the confirmed cannon ages for Voltron, I need to put this disclosure out. Obviously, I began writing this story before cannon ages were confirmed and posted chapters before finding out yesterday and today. I want to warn readers that this fic DOES NOT follow the cannon ages in the show. I had my own HCs and ideas about their ages before hand, and so this fic will continue to follow that. If you are interested here are my fic's ages:

Shiro: 19

Keith: 17

Lance: 17

Hunk: 17

Pidge: 16

I always imagined Shiro younger and Pidge older (yes Pidge may be small but my sister was similar when she was 16). There shouldn't be too much problems as this is a family/team fic but I thought I'd let you know.

Hello! Do you guys know what time it is? STORY TIME! So, this chapter took a bit longer than usual due to schoolwork and working more hours. I didn't have much time to write and when I did I was too tired to do anything. But, I managed to crank out this baby today so that's great! Can I just tell you all that you are all amazing and I love each and every one of you, your comments, kudos, support and love for this story keeps me going!

Okay, so I had a reviewer bring up some comments and concerns about Galra!Keith, and they had some good points. Since Galra!Keith is fanon and not canon, there's no set boundaries or set of rules to follow, especially with his DNA, construction etc. Which gives fans, writers and artists a lot of room to explore and do it themselves. I've decided to come up with a list of my own ideas about Galra!Keith, and that which applies mainly to this story. You can read it on tumblr right below [<http://lordofthebigtimesupernatural.tumblr.com/post/147770380713/ysbsom-voltron-fanfic-ideas>] if you want. Again, this is a piece of fiction writing and not all my ideas are scientifically accurate or fits in with everyone's opinions. This is fiction so I take some leeway to write what I want and I don't overanalyze a lot.

With that in mind, I hope you enjoy the chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

How can you not see me?

How can you not see me, when I'm standing right in front of you?

x.x.V.x.x

Lance wasn't sure how much time it had been, since Allura had opened the worm hole, swallowing them up and shooting them to *another* unknown part of space. All he knew was that it

felt as if the universe were darker and colder than ever before. Even he couldn't bring himself to crack a joke in the past few weeks of torment.

Weeks since any of them had last seen Zarkon.

And Keith.

Lance never thought it would *hurt* this much to have Keith without them. He never realized how big of an impact that stupid, lame mullet-headed brat, had in any of their lives. Even after the "incident" in the training room, Lance had never realized how much he found himself *missing* Keith, until Keith wasn't there to argue with him.

Keith wasn't there to call him out on his shit.

Nor was he there to congratulate Lance on some sort of accomplishment.

He wasn't there to sit beside Lance when Lance was feeling particularly homesick.

He wasn't there to fall asleep in awkward positions and force Keith to drag him back to bed, all the while grumbling about the pain in his neck.

Keith was gone.

Lance could feel tears pricking in the corners of his eyes at the thought of their teammate, who had literally been ripped away from them before their very eyes. His mind was still haunted by the images of Keith, floating in the vast expanse of anti-gravity space. His heart still raced at the thought that all Zarkon had to do was removed Keith's helmet and Keith would have died right in front of them. He couldn't begin to understand *why* Zarkon hadn't just immediately killed Keith, but he could begin to piece an idea together. An idea that Lance would rather not think about.

He knew the only reason Zarkon would take one of them prisoner, without killing them, was for torture.

Lance nearly threw up at the thought, as he curled in on himself from where he was seated upon his bed. His door was wide open, for anyone to look into or out. If he looked up he could see the edges of the doorway that led into Keith's room and Lance's stomach lurched.

He couldn't even begin to imagine the types of torture that Keith must be subjected to by now. It had been *weeks*. There was no doubt that Zarkon had to have tortured Keith for so long. Why, Keith might not even be alive for all he knew –

Lance squeezed his eyes shut and pressed his hands against his ears at the painful thought. *No, no. Do not think like that. Keith is fine. He's alive and we'll save him.*

"We'll be there in time. He's still alive." Lance said out loud. His voice was hoarse from disuse and his throat was thick with tears while his body shook on his bed. Every now and again he would peek up from underneath his arms to see the edges of Keith's door frame, but he could never bring himself to move towards it. Nobody could bring themselves to enter Keith's room, in fact, not even Allura.

Lance knew that everyone was blaming themselves for the failure of their last mission, including himself. Normally, he would have gone to each and every one of his teammates to help get rid of any thoughts of self-blaming and doubt. But how could he do that now, without being a hypocrite? He sure as hell blamed himself just as much as anyone else on this ship for losing Keith.

For the first time, since leaving Earth in the Blue Lion, Lance didn't know what to do. Even worse was that he didn't know who he could turn to about all this.

Back on Earth, the one person he had gone to about *anything* and *everything* had, ironically not been his mother (though she was a tight second place) but rather, his older sister. She'd always been there from when he was a child to when he had grown into a lanky and obnoxious teen, despite the ten-year age gap between them. When he was sad or frustrated, he knew he could have stormed into her room and vented out everything on his mind. All she would have to do, was *listen*.

She knew all about his frustrations at the Garrison and his rivalry with Keith. She'd been there to share his excitement when he made it into his fighter class training and even listened when he admitted to missing Keith, and missing the "neck-in-neck competitions."

Lance missed all of his family; he'd had for months now, but right now in this moment, he just wished he had his sister to talk to.

"I don't know what to do, *hermana*, I'm so scared and I don't know what to do."

x.x.V.x.x

Pidge knew it wasn't exactly healthy to hide away inside the Green Lion, only coming out to eat. But they couldn't bring themselves to care too much. Not when everything was falling apart right before their eyes.

How could they be surrounded by everyone, knowing that everyone actually wasn't there? When they knew that Keith was lost, cold and alone in the clutches of Zarkon and his entire empire. When they knew that Keith was suffering at the hands of Haggar and Zarkon. How could they face everyone, knowing that Shiro's eyes were more often red from silent tears and that he seemed to have lost his once gentle but firm voice? When Lance hadn't cracked a single joke or smiled in almost two weeks now. When Hunk refused food. When Allura hesitated in opening anymore worm holes.

How could they pretend that everything was okay, when it was so obvious that it wasn't?

How could they keep pretending?

Pidge's eyes lowered when they heard the soft rumbling coming from their lion, in obvious worry for its pilot. They gently dragged their hand along the floor as if they were trying to pet the metallic beast. They could feel the heaviness in their hearts growing when they saw Shiro walking the halls, alone.

Again.

Before, Shiro would have immediately found Pidge in their lion, and would have waited outside the lion until Pidge came out. All the while talking about anything and everything, from the stars in space to his favorite food dish back on Earth and even little stories about her father and brother on Kerberos. He would keep talking quietly, without ever needing Pidge to answer and would wait for hours at a time, until Pidge joined him outside the Green Lion.

However, that was before Shiro seemed to have lost the desire to lead.

Just as everyone else had.

Really, Pidge couldn't blame anyone, not even Shiro. They weren't doing too much better

themselves and hadn't touched a single piece of technology, nor had they tried to enhance or fix anything on the ship. Not even their lion. Pidge couldn't bring themselves to even pick up a screw driver. They didn't have the energy or the motivation anymore.

From where they sat, they could just see the glowing red shield that surrounded the Red Lion. Untouched and unmoving.

As if sensing their paladin had been ejected, the Red Lion had placed a force-field around itself as soon as Voltron had disbanded on Allura's ship. The lion's eyes dimmed and the shield was up, so no one could get into it. Not even Allura or Coran. The Red Lion was silent and lifeless, as if it were grieving for its paladin along with everyone else.

Pidge couldn't tell if the shield was up simply due to Keith being taken by Zarkon. Or if it meant, that it was waiting for a new paladin.

Meaning Keith would have to be...

Pidge felt a sob building up in their chest and immediately refused the thought any further. Logically, they knew that this was a strong possibility, but at the moment Pidge just wanted to stop thinking logically. They wanted to hope and pray, and they wanted their prayers to be received. Though, they had never gotten through, really, for their dad or brother.

But that was a whole different set of circumstances.

Through blurry vision, Pidge could see that Shiro had stopped right in front of the Red Lion.

Again.

Pidge calculated that Shiro would probably spend another two hours just staring at the Red Lion, with shoulders slumped and posture screaming defeat. Then he would sulk back into the training room, and proceed to destroy training robot after training robot. Only emerging for water or sometimes food.

It made Pidge sick with worry.

But were they really any better?

Pidge was so lost in their thoughts that they hadn't seen or heard someone else coming up towards the Green Lion. They practically jumped a foot in the air when there was a soft knocking coming from the bottom of the Green Lion. Pidge scrambled over to look through the lion's eyes, when they saw Lance leaning against the paw of the lion.

They glanced over towards Shiro when they noticed lance's somber eyes focused on Shiro's back. They could feel their own heart breaking at the sight, before Lance looked up their way. Even though he didn't say anything, he managed to give Pidge a small and weak smile, but it was a smile nonetheless. Pidge took a moment to consider their options, they knew Lance most likely wanted to come up, but at the same time Pidge wasn't sure they *wanted* company just yet.

On the other hand, Pidge was the one who vocalized in Keith's case that bottling up emotions and keeping silent wasn't healthy.

What a hypocrite.

Hearing an encouraging noise from the Green Lion, Pidge lowered the head to the ground

and opened its mouth in front of Lance. To Lance's credit, he didn't flinch or jump at the sudden close contact (like he hadn't during the first encounter with the Blue Lion). Shiro had also remained silent and unmoving, as if he hadn't even heard the Green Lion moving.

Oh Shiro.

Once Lance entered the pilot's seat of the Green Lion, he'd remained quiet while Pidge merely buried their head in their arms. For a while neither of them said a word or made a move. That is, until Lance decided to take a seat beside Pidge.

"Did you know Keith hated roller coasters?"

Pidge blinked back the tears that were threatening to fall in confusion, before lifting up to look at Lance. Lance, however, was looking directly at Pidge with a softer but warmer smile than before.

"What?"

"Keith, he hated roller coasters with, like, a passion." Lance continued as if their conversation was making perfect and something that they normally talked about. Pidge, honestly couldn't figure out Lance's motivation or direction headed with this conversation, though not a lot made sense to them at the moment. Maybe it was best to just go along with it.

"Really?"

"Yeah, during our first year at the Garrison we took a class trip to an amusement park. Hunk and I rode every ride there was – of course Hunk got sick and in hindsight it probably wasn't our best decision – oh, right, okay, okay." Lance chuckled weakly when Pidge sent him a pointed glare for going off track. He rubbed the back of his neck and smiled. "Anyway, I was the only one that noticed that Keith didn't ride *any* of the roller coasters. He flat out disappeared or refused any time the class got in line for a roller coaster."

Pidge was having a hard time imagining their hard-headed, hot-tempered and instinctual friend being *hesitant* to ride something as little as a roller coaster.

"I didn't realize, at first, that it was because he hated roller coasters." Lance continued with a shrug, ignoring Pidge's dubious look. "Not until we were paired together as pilot and co-pilot in a simulator. Somehow I managed to spin the ship and we were spinning like the loop-de-loop roller coaster at the amusement park. Keith was shouting and cursing the entire time and his knuckles were gripping the controls so hard that they were *white*." Lance couldn't help but chuckle at this and even Pidge managed a small smile

"I'd never seen him so embarrassed afterwards, though he didn't show it outright. But I kept this little information to myself, you know, just in case I needed it in the future?" Lance's smile turned into a small smirk. "Just to piss him off sometimes, I would purposely turn the ship into a spinning loop whenever we were paired as partners." Lance chuckled at the memory and counted it as a victory when they heard a soft and weak laugh from Pidge.

Silence washed over them once more, but this time it was comfortable.

"Keith was the reason I never gave up hope with my dad and brother still being alive." Pidge said quietly. Lance was startled but for once didn't comment or interrupt. Rather they let Pidge take their time. "I never met him until we all rescued Shiro, but I apparently saw him once before. On the day that he got booted out of the Garrison."

Lance's eyes widened.

He'd heard stories about why Keith had been kicked out of the Garrison but no one was every sure the exact reason. Some speculated, he was actually sent out on a secret mission by the Garrison after Kerberos. Others speculated that Keith had trashed a simulation in a fit of anger. Some even thought that Keith had stolen a ship from the Garrison and fled, never to be seen again.

"I was walking, er, more like sneaking through the halls, when I was still Katie. Around a corner I saw Keith and a commander in a heated argument. The commander had a good hundred pounds on Keith and was a good few inches taller than him, but Keith never backed down nor did he stop his argument. They were yelling about Kerberos."

"There's no way that it was due to pilot error! You're lying to us! Shiro, never would have made such an error to get his crew killed!"

"The commander was more pissed than usual, cause some punk kid was actually in his face, and not afraid of him." Pidge murmured, while running their fingers through some dust on the floor.

"What actually happened? Where is Shiro and the crew? What aren't you telling us?"

"Keith really knew how to push all the wrong buttons with this commander. I thought he was going to kill Keith, but still Keith never backed down." Pidge said. Lance swallowed thickly. "Then the commander said something about Keith, and he just went insane."

"That pilot was nothing more than an amateur. It was expected for him to make a mistake like this."

"That's when Keith socked the commander right in the jaw. *Hard.*" Pidge snorted at the memory, remembering how shocked they had been but gleeful at the same time. "I'd never seen anyone so angry before. Keith nearly beat that commander unconscious and that commander could have easily smashed him in body size. It took nearly four guards to drag Keith off the commander, still kicking and screaming. He was kicked out after that."

"Sheesh. Wow. Okay, didn't know that." Lance whispered, still wide-eyed and shocked. "How did he learn to fight like that?"

"I taught him."

Pidge and Lance both jumped up in surprise at the sound of Shiro's voice so close to them. Both spun around to see Shiro taking a seat right beside them, still looking defeated, but speaking to them for the first time in days.

x.x.V.x.x

"Dad, what are you doing with Keith's helmet?" Matt Holt asked his father, when Commander Holt picked up the cracked and discarded helmet lying in the corner of their cell. Commander Holt flipped the helmet around in his hands, marveling at the unfamiliar technology woven in the helmet.

"Keith won't be needing it."

"Dad, how can you say that?!"

"Matt, you saw what they did to him. What...they turned him into." Commander Holt

shuddered at the last memory he had of the human, once known as Keith, who at the time didn't look *human*. Yellow eyes bore hungrily into Matt and him, while teeth as sharp as knives glistened with saliva. Purple skin reflected off the lights of the small cell. "He's not coming back from that. We haven't seen him in weeks anyhow. Zarkon's either...killed him or made him one of his soldiers."

Matt felt his heart sink at the idea and the fear that always stayed with him since their capture nearly two years ago, lingered. He swallowed and looked away from the helmet in his father's hands. He may not have known Keith longer than a few days, but the name sounded familiar. Something that had to do with Shiro, but Matt couldn't figure out what.

"Keith won't be needing this anymore. But we can use this!" Commander Holt's voice turned from sorrow to excitement, causing Matt to frown. "There's a communication device of some sort in this helmet. It's been damaged from impact, but nothing a little bit of tinkering can't fix. If we can get it fixed, we might be able to get in contact with someone. Like Shiro."

"Shiro?" Matt asked.

Commander Holt sighed. "Yes. You heard Keith the first night he was here. He mumbled something about Earth and Shiro, which means that Shiro escaped and made it to Earth. Keith knew Shiro – our Shiro – and we can use that to contact them."

"How do you know, it's the same Shiro?" Matt pointed out. He was hesitant to believe it would be this easy to reach out to help.

"How many people do you know, go by Shiro?" Commander Holt's eyebrow rose and Matt felt his face heat up.

"True." Matt scratched at the side of his face. "Do you even know how that thing works? It doesn't look like anything from Earth."

"No." Commander Holt rubbed his chin, while he opened a panel on the helmet to reveal wires tangled together. "It's certainly not. If I'm not mistaken, it must have something to do with... with Voltron."

Matt's eyes widened. "Voltron? Are you sure? Are you telling me that Shiro and this Keith found Voltron? *Does that mean Zarkon now has Voltron?!*"

"No. I would imagine that if Zarkon had Voltron, everything would be destroyed by now." Commander Holt assured while he messed with the wires in Keith's helmet. "And there wouldn't be any reason for us to still be alive." Matt flinched at that statement and slid down the cold wall of the cell.

He couldn't remember the last time he had seen anything other than a dirty cell, a Galra ship or fight arena. He couldn't remember what the cities on Earth looked like or what the wild Honey cakes his mother used to make, smelt like. He couldn't remember the last time he had seen his mother or Katie.

Oh Katie.

Matt could only imagine Katie's agony once she had realized that her brother and father were gone forever. The thought brought fresh tears to his eyes.

"What do you plan on telling everyone?" Matt asked when his dad cursed at a spark within the helmet. He smiled at his father's determination. "Do you really think it's wise to have

them rescue *us* when they have Voltron to worry about and Zarkon?"

Determined to keep busy so his son wouldn't be able to see the weary and tormented look on his face, Commander Holt did not look up from the helmet. *Why couldn't he have been spared? Why did he have to come with me?* "I'm not sure. If Shiro can save you, I'll be happy, but if not...if not then we can at least help him to take down Zarkon. Infiltrate his ship and weaknesses so Voltron can attack."

Matt nodded. "What about Keith?"

"What about Keith?" Commander Holt didn't miss a beat.

"That's Keith's helmet." Matt frowned. "If he really does know Shiro and whatever others are with him, then they're going to recognize Keith's signal and helmet. Then when we answer instead of him, what are we going to tell them?"

Commander Holt did not stop in his work, but Matt could see him falter in his work. "... We'll get there when we do, son." Commander didn't know what he wanted to tell Shiro about Keith, nor did he want to think about it. Unlike his son, Shiro had recognized Keith's name immediately.

Keith had been someone Shiro had often talked about on the trip to Kerberos. From what it sounded like, Keith had been a close family friend to Shiro; something of a younger brother to his co-pilot. Someone special and precious to Shiro.

He couldn't even imagine how much it would *kill* Shiro if he ever learned what has happened to Keith.

There was a quick flash of light, causing Commander Holt to blink rapidly before a quiet beeping filled the room and a red light began to blink on Keith's helmet. Matt crawled over to his father in awe, when the sound of static began to come from the helmet. The father and son shared a quick look.

"Hello?" Commander Holt brought the helmet closer to his mouth and spoke.

Still static filled the room.

"Hello? Can anyone hear me?"

More static.

"Is there any one? Hello? Does anyone copy?"

Static.

"Hello? Shiro? Shiro?"

Static. Then, *click*.

"...th..." Commander Holt's grip on the helmet tightened and Matt choked back a cry at the weak voice, speaking under all the static.

"...eith...eith..."

"Hello? Shiro?" Commander Holt desperately clutched the helmet as he spoke to it. He heard the static slowly getting lower and lower, and the voice grew louder and louder.

“...eith...*Keith?*”

“*Shiro?*”

x.x.V.x.x

“You, taught Keith, how to fight?” Lance asked cautiously, as if he were afraid that one wrong word would scare Shiro off. However, Shiro remained and sat cross legged in front of his two teammates. “Why?”

Pidge swallowed nervously when Shiro didn’t answer right away. Instead his eyes became heavy and sad, dropping his gaze to the floor. Gently, Pidge rubbed and arm up and down Shiro’s real arm and to their relief, he didn’t pull away.

“Keith was small when I first met him.” Shiro finally whispered, voice hoarse and gruff. Lance blinked. “He was about six and I was eight, but he looked even younger than six. He was a tiny and thin, little guy. Barely skin and bones. But boy, did he have a temper.” There was a ghost of a smile on Shiro’s lip before it was gone just as fast.

“He wasn’t about to back down to any bullies, no matter if they were three times his size and twice his age.” Shiro continued while Pidge and Lance remained quiet. “Keith was put into our family at the time for fostering, as my parents were registered foster parents. Keith had only been with us for a year until he was sent off to another home. But in that time, I like to think he was happy.” Shiro sighed. “He was the first friend I made, and I always knew I had to protect him. Especially when he went up against two, huge sixth graders, that easily could have beat him senseless.” Shiro shook his head with a snort and even Lance rolled his eyes.

“That sounds like Keith.”

“Yeah, he was always like that. But I was so scared that I wouldn’t always be around to keep him out of trouble.” Shiro continued quietly. “So I taught him to throw a punch. He was a quick learner ad by this time he was sent to another home, I had no doubt that Keith would be able to protect himself.” Pidge nearly smiled at the fond look in Shiro’s eyes.

“So, wait, this means that you knew Keith before all this?”

“Yeah, thought that was pretty obvious though.” Shiro shrugged. “I hadn’t seen again until his first year at the Garrison and my third. At that time, he wasn’t actually living in foster care anymore.”

“Why?” Pidge asked.

“He didn’t belong in one. Left as soon as he could, and chose to live at the Garrison instead. I saw him in one of his flight simulator classes.” Shiro replied softly. Lance smiled at a memory, that only he seemed to understand and chuckled, while Pidge smiled. “So, he really knocked out a commander?”

Pidge squirmed under Shiro’s sudden stare their way. It was only slightly awkward to have that much of Shiro’s gaze on them, after weeks of never making eye contact.

“Uh, yeah, Commander Hallsworth.” Pidge responded with a blush. Shiro blew his breath out his nose, flipping up his white bangs.

“No surprise there. He and Keith were always on bad terms.”

A new silence washed over the group and Pidge fiddled with their hands. Lance tapped on the metal of the Green Lion while Shiro folded his hands in his lap.

“Shiro,” Pidge was relieved when Shiro actually looked in their direction, even if their eyes looked lifeless. “Are we going to be okay?”

At this, Shiro flinched.

How could he have done this? As their leader?

He took a good look at Pidge, before taking an equally long look at Lance and for the first time in weeks, Shiro noticed the brokenness that was within his teammates. He could see their puffy and red eyes from having cried so hard; he could see the weary lines drawn into their face (much too young, they were much too young for that). He finally saw how exhausted they were.

“I’m sorry, you two.” Shiro finally croaked.

Pidge’s eyes widened and Lance’s throat tightened. “What?”

“I’m sorry, I haven’t been a good leader as of late.” Shiro’s eyes dropped to the floor while his body hunched in on themselves. “I’ve been too busy wallowing in pity and guilt that I couldn’t even realize how much you all were hurting, and I ignored it.”

Pidge felt their eyes narrow. “No, Shiro...”

“I’m sorry for letting Keith getting captured. I’m sorry for not looking out for him – or you guys. I’m sorry that everyone’s hurting so much.” Shiro continued, though his voice never lowered or raised in volume. Lance huffed a teary sigh.

“Shiro, no. You were hurting. Just as much as any of us.” Pidge finally said, before Shiro could interrupt them with guilt and self-doubt once again.

“Yeah man. We’re all sad about Keith, and we’re worried about him, but you and he were the closest here. We can’t even imagine how you must be feeling right now.” Lance added when he noticed Shiro starting to shake his head. Pidge shot a grateful look towards Lance, who beamed.

“Shiro, none of us considered how much this has to affect you, and the pressure you must feel as being our leader.” Pidge said softly. Still Shiro did not look back at them. “We’re sorry that we never noticed, but you’re not alone anymore. Just like you told Keith: You have us. Your family.” They saw the way Shiro’s breath hitched as this and smiled. Shiro swallowed thickly.

Though, before Shiro could speak again, everyone froze at the sound of static suddenly filling the lion.

Bzz. Zzzz...

“What’s that? Shiro asked suddenly, eyes narrowed and right fist clenched. He internally smiled at the defensive stance that Pidge and Lance had naturally taken. The three quieted and the room was filled with static again.

“...lo...”

Pidge’s eyes widened when they noticed their helmet lying only a few feet away from them. They scrambled towards the helmet, snatching it up with shaking hands and pulled it closer to their ears. To their shock, they could hear the static coming from the helmet. From the comm

device.

“...lo...he...lo...”

“Keith?!”

At this, Shiro and Lance were launching themselves practically on top of Pidge. They could see how wide Shiro’s eyes had gotten and how Lance’s voice was stuck in his throat. Shiro pulled the helmet closer to himself.

“Keith? Keith, is that you?”

“...hel...lo?”

“Keith? Can you hear me? Keith? Keith?”

“Shiro?”

Pidge’s entire body tensed, as their blood turned to ice and their eyes burned. That wasn’t Keith...that was –

“DAD?!” Pidge yanked the helmet out of Shiro’s hands, clutching at it as if her life depended on it. Shiro nearly stumbled back at the revelation, unsure of how he was feeling at this time. On one hand, his crew members (Matt and his father) were alive. But on the other hand, where was Keith?

“Dad, is that you?” Shiro could hear that Pidge’s voice was thick with emotion, and that they were seconds away from panicking. He tried to settle a hand of comfort on Pidge’s shoulder, but winced when he felt the tremors wracking Pidge’s body.

“Commander Holt?” Shiro finally asked, when he realized that Pidge was thinking too emotionally right now. Lance was just dumbfounded at having heard the unfamiliar voice coming through the comm device, leaving Shiro as the only capable speaker.

“Shiro? Is that you?”

Shiro nearly fell into a puddle of space goo at his co-pilot’s voice. Though it was quiet and broken up by the static, Shiro would recognize that voice anywhere. He watched as Pidge’s lower lip trembled before sighing.

“Yeah, commander, it’s me.” Shiro nearly smiled upon hearing the gasps coming through the comm. “Is Matt with you?”

Shiro! It’s you!” Shiro smiled and Pidge nearly fainted upon hearing the voice of her elder brother. Shiro quickly helped pull Pidge into a supported position.

“Is this really you, Matt? Commander?”

At this, Pidge’s eye darkened and her look nearly became murderous. “Of course it’s him! How can you even think that?” Shiro sighed wearily at Pidge’s anger and swallowed.

“Pidge, you’ve seen what Haggar can do. I want to be sure that this is real, and not some trick. Don’t you?” Shiro said. He saw the way that Pidge’s eyes filled with a conflicting emotion. Finally, though, Pidge nodded and looked away from Shiro. He was right.

“How do I know that you’re actually Matt and Commander Holt?” Shiro asked as he tried

to hear over the sound of the static.

“Shiro, I understand that this is difficult to believe and honestly I don’t blame you for being wary but you have to –”

“Keith was your childhood friend.” Shiro’s hand twitched at his side when Matt cut off his father. Lance held his breath in shock while Pidge blinked. “You told Dad and I about him, and some of the other new recruits – something about Keith’s rival? But Keith was your best friend, Keith Kogane. You told us, you’ve never told anyone Keith’s full name, because he didn’t want to.”

Shiro found himself unable to speak for the longest time after this. “Matt...”

“I know you still don’t fully believe us, Shiro, and I get that. I really do. But time isn’t on our side and please, you have to trust us for now. I promise, it’s us.” Matt replied, barely able to be heard over the sounds of static over the comm. Shiro felt his heart thumping loudly in his chest and he knew that Pidge wasn’t feeling much better themselves.

“Where are you guys? Where has Zarkon taken you?” Shiro began to ask calmly. “We looked for you, Pidge and I, on Zarkon’s ship but you weren’t there.”

“Pidge?! Why is Pidge with you?!” Shiro winced when Commander Holt and Matt suddenly screamed into the comm. Pidge’s eyes widened before they snatched their helmet from Shiro.

“Dad? Matt?”

“Katie?” Matt’s voice sounded much hoarser now. “Katie, what are you doing?”

“Matt. Oh Matt, you’re alive. You and Dad really are alive!” Pidge ignored their old name but wanted to cry out of relief upon hearing her brother’s voice. “You’re not dead, you’re really alive!”

“Of course we are Katie.” Commander Holt gently said. Pidge’s lips trembled. “Katie, what are you doing with Shiro? With Voltron?”

“The Galra. They tried to come to Earth. We found Voltron, dad and we had to keep it safe from Zarkon.”

“You really found Voltron?” Commander Holt shakily asked. “And you’re running around space, fleeing from a galactic empire?!”

Pidge flinched. “Dad –”

“I hate to cut this happy reunion short, but where are you guys? Where’s Keith?” Lance interrupted with a huff. He felt bad about cutting Pidge from their moment with their family, but his nerves were frying in anticipation. It was all too much to soak in at one time.

“We’re on a Captain’s ship. The one where the arena is. Where you often fought, Shiro.” Shiro shuddered at the memories that began to creep up into his mind, upon mentioning the arena. His hand twitched at his sides. Lance seemed to be the only one who noticed that Commander Holt had completely avoided answering his second question.

“The arena? Have you guys fought?” Shiro swallowed.

“No. Not yet. But they’re waiting for something.” Commander Holt said. Lance’s eyes narrowed. “There’s hundreds of prisoners here, Shiro. Zarkon has turned the arena into a slaughter house. No one survives. There’s talk of a new reigning champion. A galra.”

Pidge’s heart cracked at the thought of her family fighting.

“Alright. Do you know what Zarkon’s plan is? Where’s his ship?” Shiro asked.

“We’re not sure. Normally this ship stays close to Zarkon’s but as of late, it’s been traveling alone.” Commander Holt continued while Pidge scrambled to grab their laptop from under their chair. “I don’t exactly know our coordinates though, or where we could be.”

“Just a long way from home.” Matt added. Pidge opened the laptop, only to begin typing away furiously. There was a long cord coming from the side of Pidge’s helmet and to their laptop.

“Where’s Keith?” Lance finally asked once again. This time, though, his voice was much darker and his eyes were narrowed. Shiro blinked in realization, turning to stare at the helmet in Pidge’s hand in realization. The only way to connect our comms is through our own helmets.

Shiro and Lance were both wary at the sudden silence over the comm. They could only hear the sound of Pidge furiously typing away on their laptop.

“Commander Holt?”

There were a few more seconds of silence, before Commander Holt finally sighed. “Keith is –”

Then there was a loud bang and then the sound of static and all other noises cut out completely. Shiro jumped and snatched the helmet up. His heart was racing and his palms were sweating.

“Commander Holt? Matt? Can you hear me?”

“Commander Holt? Helllllloooooo? Matt?” Lance also asked.

Then quietly, Pidge looked up. “I picked up their location. We need to go, now.”

x.x.V.x.x

They had found out about Keith's helmet.

The Galra guards had found Commander Holt and Matt speaking into Keith's helmet and destroyed the helmet before they could say anything further to Shiro and the others. They had found out and weren't too happy.

Matt was actually surprised that he and his father weren't executed or dead yet. Though he realized why the Galra hadn't killed them immediately, when they were dragged towards the arena. That's when he realized why.

Matt and his father nervously walked alongside the other prisoners towards the arena. They could hear the roars and screams coming from the crowd, waiting in anticipation for the next slaughter. Matt trembled against his father when the ground rumbled with vibrations. He noticed the cautious and frightened looks on every other prisoner behind them. Matt could feel his fears spiking.

The last time he'd been to the arena, he'd had Shiro as his protection, risking his own life in order to keep him safe. He'd had someone who stood by his side and took his place in the arena, even if it meant certain death for him.

Shiro...

As the prisoners reached the entrance of the arena, Matt's eyes widened at the sheer number of people in the crowds, not all being Galra. Many were of different species that Matt had never heard of or seen before. He felt sickened by the amount of people that watched and *cheered* for this slaughter of aliens, all for the sake of entertainment.

How barbaric.

Matt swallowed when two robotic soldiers came up to Matt and his father and pulled the two away from the line of prisoners. He attempted to wrench himself free of the iron grip on his arm, with his father doing the same, but it was no use. There was no escaping this.

And they would be the first to die.

Matt stumbled when he was shoved rather harshly forward, with a small blade being thrust into his hand. Now Matt had learned to use a pocket knife to his advantage back on Earth, but he'd never once held a weapon larger than that in his life. *How could they expect him to fight like this?*

To his surprise, his father was handed a similar weapon before the two were shoved to their knees at the edge of the arena. Matt's heart beat faster and faster with every yell and cheer coming from the audience surrounding them from all angles. His eyes darted across the arena, too rapid and too wide to be any good while his hands shook.

"Matt, Matt, look at me. We'll be okay." Commander Holt grabbed a hold of his son's shoulders, noticing the frozen and fearful look in Matt. His own heart was beating like crazy and his mind whirling a hundred miles an hour.

"How can you say that?!" Matt cried when his father had dragged him onto his feet. The two clung to each other like scared children but could not find any sight of their competitor. "Shiro *nearly* died in this and he was the champion! We stand no chance!"

"Don't say that!" Commander Holt said, fearing for his son's mental stability at this point. Deep in the crevices of his mind, Commander knew that Matt was right. He knew they were no match for a trained galran soldier that was made to fight. They'd never fought anything before in their life and were in no shape to start now. Though, in his heart, he couldn't bring himself to admit this now.

He couldn't lose hope now.

Not for Matt.

We, we just, we just need to work together. Okay?" Commander Holt nervously clenched his hands tighter around the blade in his hand. Matt's own hands were violently shaking, and the blade shook with it.

Commander Holt nearly sneered at the crowd roaring in excitement around them.

"We welcome tonight's fresh meat: The Humans of Earth." A loud, nasally voice hissed from somewhere in the crowds. Matt whipped around in fear, feeling his father's back pressed up

against his own. "Fresh meat against our Newest Champion. The soldier of Zarkon himself."

Matt nearly tumbled when the ground vibrated and a door began to rise upward to his far left. Shrinking in fear, Matt pressed up closer to his father as his eyes never left the opening door. He swallowed harshly when two large galran soldiers, in full arms came walking in. Both had a set of large, iron chains in their hands, and were dragging something behind them. Matt hesitantly took a step back when the soldiers yanked on the chains forward, and the Champion entered the arena.

Matt's eyes widened.

The Champion was galran, that much was for sure with their purple skin and large, furry ears. Its yellow eyes were bright and filled with an unimaginable hunger (*or maybe an unquenchable thirst for blood?*) as it licked its teeth. The soldier was not as well built or muscular as even the soldiers holding the chains, that connected to a collar around its neck. However, the galran was tall, towering over eight feet, similar to the height of many galra. Matt could see its claws at its side, sharpened like a set of spears on a hand.

The galran was dressed in typical galran battle armor with a helmet under the arm of the soldier on its left. The Champion made an animalistic snarl and snapped its teeth at the roaring crowd, which only excited the crowd even further. Its yellow eyes locked onto Matt and Commander Holt, who were trying to back away from the chained Champion. Immediately, it jerked against its chains to lunge at Matt and Commander Holt. Matt squeaked, but the soldiers holding its chains yanked harshly and pulled the Champion back.

The two soldiers began to work to remove the chains from the champion, before settling a galran helmet over its face and eyes. The collar remained around the Champion's neck but once the helmet was on and the chains were gone, the galra aimed to move.

To kill.

Matt cried out and twisted away from his father, barely missing a claw aimed straight for his face. He harshly tumbled against the ground as he rolled, dropping his knife in the process. The Champion paused in its movement and turned to face Matt, who was frozen where he was. It crouched low and almost on all fours, ready to lunge again.

Recognizing this, Matt rolled away from the galran and scrambled to his feet. He ignored the growls coming from the Champion behind him. Matt sprinted towards his father when he heard the sound of claws scrapping against the ground behind him and his heart jumped into his throat.

His heart stopped when he felt a clawed hand wrap around his ankle and pull him to the ground. Matt winced as the knife rolled out of his hand and claws dug into his ankle.

"Matt!" Commander Holt's scream could barely be heard over the sound of the cheering crowd. Twisting, so he could look over his shoulder, Matt saw the Champion crouched low with one hand around Matt's ankle, the other was raised to strike. The Champion's lips curled back over sharpened canines.

This was it. This was how he died.

Matt flinched when the Champion suddenly howled as a knife was thrown over Matt and scraped against the Champion's side. Momentarily distracted, the Champion released its grip on Matt and jumped back. Before Matt had time to process what had happened, he was pulled to his feet and dragged away from the snarling Champion. Matt attempted to stand and push his father's

hands away.

The Champion had then snatched the knife up, holding it far better than Matt or his father ever had, before throwing it aside. The metal of the blade shattered upon impact and Matt could barely believe his eyes.

“D-Dad?” Matt practically whimpered while the Champion crouched once more on to all fours. The Champion then pushed off all four to begin sprinting right towards Matt and his father, with claws raised to strike. Matt tried to break free of his father’s grasp in order to get out of the way of the Champion, only to find himself stuck.

“Dad?!” Matt whipped his head around to stare at his father, but his father was too busy watching the Champion. Matt’s heart raced in his chest and his limbs flailed. “Dad?!”

Just as the Champion was a mere foot away from them, Commander Holt shoved his son aside and threw them both out of the way. Matt cried out, squeezing his eyes shut, and waited for impact. However, when none came he hesitantly opened his eyes.

The Champion had missed him and was running past them due to momentum. Matt breathed a momentarily sigh of relief, that was cut too quickly, when he watched.

Rather than running at full force into the wall, the Champion merely turned his body and used his momentum to plant his feet on the *90-degree* angled way and using the wall to push off and run towards Matt and his father.

This champion could easily use any surface to move!

Matt clung desperately to his father, unable to move out of terror and defeat, when the Champion sprinted at them. Even his father seemed unable to move and avoid a strike from the Champion. Matt closed his eyes with a prayer on his lips.

Now this was it. He was truly done for.

I’m sorry dad.

I’m sorry mom.

I’m sorry Katie.

Suddenly, without any warning, a loud siren blared and a red light began to fill the arena. Matt opened his eyes with a wince, watching as the Champion fell to its knees and covered its ears when the siren blared. Matt noticed that everyone in the crowds had gone quiet and there was the feeling of *tension* all through the room.

Soon enough, three guards were sprinting into the arena, two of which carrying chains and running at the kneeled Champion. The other was racing at Matt and Commander Holt, before yanking them to their feet. The soldier pushed Matt, who leaned heavily on one leg while the other bled, and Commander Holt back towards the entrance of which they came from. Over his shoulder, Matt saw the other guards locking the chains around the Champions neck, who was snarling and trying to shove them off, before large handcuffs on the Champion.

Matt stared at his dad in terror and confusion but was thrown into the other prisoners before the door slammed shut behind them. Commander Holt grabbed his son before his ankle could give out and held him upright.

“Dad, what’s going on?”

“I’m not sure son. Nothing good.” Commander Holt muttered bitterly. Another prisoner, an alien with blue skin and dark black eyes with a large nose, placed another arm around Matt to keep him upright.

“The ship’s been infiltrated. An enemy is among us.” The alien said.

Matt and Commander Holt shared a knowing look. “You don’t think it’s –”

“Commander Holt? Matt?” Matt, Commander Holt and the other prisoners spun around at the voice before a figure dropped from the vents into the room. Followed by five others. For the first time in over a year, Matt could feel a smile forming on his face.

“Shiro.”

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro nearly fainted from relief upon seeing his old crew mates, looking worse for wear but *alive*. Pidge was the first to move beside him, running up to their father and brother and throwing their arms around the two. Commander Holt and Matt jumped back in surprise before realizing who it was, and soon enough all three were hugging tightly with tears in their eyes. Lance and Hunk both scanned the room of at least a dozen prisoners with a lack of guards around them. Shiro frowned in suspicion.

“Dad, oh dad! Matt! You’re alive; you’re both alive!” Pidge practically sobbed into their father’s chest.

“Oh Katie, how I’ve missed you.” Commander Holt whispered softly, stroking Pidge’s hair. Matt smiled watery and continued to hold his sibling tightly. Shiro nearly smiled at the scene, before remembering what they had come here for.

“How many prisoners are in here now? We’re here to rescue you all.” Shiro asked, placing a gentle hand on Pidge’s shoulder. He ignored the looks of awe and astonishment coming from all the other prisoners.

“Only about twenty of us. That’s how many they send to fight *every hour*.” Shiro could feel his metallic hand beginning to glow out of anger and he took a deep breath. “We need to get to the escape pods and get out of here. We’re taking over the commands of this ship.”

“What?” Matt asked.

“We’re taking over.” Shiro simply said. “First we need to get the prisoners to safety.”

“Where’s Keith?” Lance tensely asked, feeling his nerves becoming more and more impatient. He felt his blood beginning to boil when he noticed the lack of response from Commander Holt and Matt. In fact, when he looked at them, they both turned their gaze away from Lance, Shiro and the others.

“I said, *where’s Keith?*” Lance felt his jaw clench and even Shiro felt his muscles tighten.

“Keep him locked up! Get him back into his cage! Move these prisoners back to their cell!” Shiro and the others quickly moved to hide themselves, out of sight at the sound of a galran guard barking orders. From where he was hidden, Shiro peeked over the edge of a wall to see two guards struggling to pull on the chains to another galran, decked out in battle armor. The chained

galran was chained by a collar around his neck and two cuffs around its hands and arms. There was no helmet on the galran but rather, what looked like a muzzle around its snarling mouth.

Breathing heavily, Shiro could feel his body reacting to the traumatic image of seeing a rabid galran so close. Memories of his team held captive and his time in the arena flashed before his eyes before he could stop them. His hands hung limply at his sides and small tremors ran across his spine.

You're not a prisoner.

Not anymore.

Shiro took a shaky breath and looked over at the galrans once more and frowned. There was something familiar about this particular temperamental galran. The mid-neck length hair and the shape of his eyes. Shiro scanned the galran from head to toe, only pausing at the galran's neck the poked out from beneath the armor and chains. Familiar raised skin, most likely from *burns*, traveled from the galrans chin and down his neck.

Shiro felt his heart stop.

"Keith?"

Lance felt sick to his stomach at Shiro's words and found himself unable to look away from the thrashing galran (*no that's Keith*). He recognized that atrocious mullet, the second he saw it and never more did Lance want to throw up, than he did in that moment. *How could this be Keith? Keith was good.*

"That's Keith..." Lance whispered, catching the horrified look in Shiro's eyes.

What had they done to their friend?

Shiro, momentarily forgetting their original mission, attempted to jump from his hiding spot. Lance wasn't too far behind him. Only Shiro felt a harsh tug on his suit, and when he turned around he was more than a little surprised to see Commander Holt holding him back.

"Shiro, not, there is nothing you can do for him. He's too far gone, there's no use." Commander Holt warned quietly. Shiro stared in disbelief at his commander.

"I can't just leave him here!"

"He won't recognize you! The Keith you knew isn't there anymore! There's nothing left of him, other than Zarkon's most blood thirsty soldier!" Commander hissed, eyes glaring up at Shiro from behind his glasses. Shiro gaped, unable to process the idea.

"We can't give up now!"

"Shiro, *Keith is gone*. There is nothing left of him. Either you leave him now, or he will kill you."

"Keith would never do that!" Lance argued hotly, earning a glare from Matt and Commander Holt. However, Lance's murderous look only increased and he clenched his fists at his side. "You wanted us all to come here and rescue *everyone* but not Keith! You're insane. I'm going to bring him back, even if I have to do it kicking and screaming." Lance shouted, before turning around and storming his way through the prisoners.

The images of Keith – *their* Keith – thrashing violently with skin as purple as galran and deranged eyes staring at him, was haunting Shiro's every move. He swallowed, unable to get the image of Keith looking anything but human out of his head. Shiro looked over at Pidge, who was refusing to look in his direction. Instead they focused their gaze on their brother, with only a hint of guilt seeping through.

Shiro's metallic hand clenched in a fist.

"I'm going with Lance. Keith is a part of this team; *this family*, and we owe to him to bring him back." With that, Shiro was racing after Lance and entering the crowded halls of the galran ship.

Oh Keith, what have we done?

x.x.V.x.x

How can you not see me, when I'm the monster in your nightmares?

Chapter End Notes

And the drama continues. Ah, yes. The net chapter will feature the reasoning, plan and explanation of why Team Voltron chose to rescue Matt, Commander Holt and the other prisoners and their thoughts on everything, and also the confrontation between Shiro, Lance and Keith. How will it go down? Who knows! But, rest assure you, it will be filled with angst. I mean, I would be offended if I couldn't write any angst for that confrontation. Absurd.

As always, your comments, reviews, kudos and support are appreciate and loved and they always bring a smile to my face. They're also Keith's only source of love right now while I make him suffer. He just needs a cuddle fest with everyone. Also, my computer is weird and left justified a lot of paragraphs, sorry about that...

Thanks and peaceout!

I'm Colder than this Home

Chapter Notes

It's that time again! And I'm earlier this time! I powered through today, skipped my homework and just got to writing. I was so excited. If I didn't have work and school work yesterday, I might have had it up by then but oh well, this will do. I told myself and you guys, I wasn't going to have long 8,000 word chapters for every chapter and what do I do? I lie.

But now we get to come to the first part of the confrontation between my Galra, kitten son and his family. Yes, I've been waiting for this. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When I look at you I know what I see.

I see the face of someone that I've loved.

x.x.V.x.x

12 hours earlier...

“I do not understand. You’re saying that you’ve not only located Keith, but also Pidge’s father and brother?” Allura asked when Pidge had burst into the central control room, with Lance and Shiro hot on their heels. Hunk’s expression filled with shock, from where he stood beside Allura. He, Allura and Coran had been working on trying to formulate a plan when the three had burst into the room.

Hunk desperately needed something to keep his mind occupied; otherwise he would have been scratching at his skin until it bled from anxiety. He needed something to keep him from worrying and panicking (as everyone else seemed to be doing at the moment) and something to feel like he was a part of this team.

Keith’s disappearance had hit them all hard, Hunk included.

Hunk felt as if he’d been in a dream after Voltron had disbanded through the worm hole. He was silent while Pidge cried out and Shiro *smashed* his comm device and Lance kept repeating over and over, “*We need to go back. We gotta get him back.*” He’d blinked more than a hundred times in the span of minutes, just trying to awaken himself from this nightmare. Except no matter what, reality continued and nothing could stop it from happening.

Hunk knew he wasn’t particularly close to Keith as Shiro was, and maybe even Lance, but he knew that the two had, as Keith would call it, *bonded*. After teaching Keith how to properly cook and bake for himself, he’d joined Hunk and Shiro every morning in order to help prepare breakfast – something Coran detested – with a smile on his face. From there, he would help Hunk to strategize. Luckily, Keith understood that Hunk wasn’t quick or agile as Keith was, and helped him to figure out a forceful defensive position, while learning to pack a powerful punch with his bayard cannon. For a while, the two fell into a comfortable routine, with Keith helping to cook and Hunk learning to *fight*. They weren’t best friends but they were on the track to becoming more

than just simple teammates.

That's why it *hurt* when Keith had been taken.

Hunk had never felt this kind of loss and hurt, except after the first days they left Earth. He didn't understand how to deal with this kind of pain without an attack overtaking all of his senses and abilities. More often than not, he found himself shaking or curling up, unable to breathe or think right. He'd managed to keep this from his teammates, as he knew everyone else was suffering as much as he had in their own ways. Even Shiro.

Especially Shiro.

At first Hunk thought that Shiro was devastated by Keith's disappearance, because he thought it made him a terrible leader. That he was unfit to call himself the leader of Voltron and *protect* his team any further. Hunk always knew there was an unimaginable level of pressure on top of Shiro being their leader. But slowly, Hunk began to rethink that maybe there was more to that what meets the eye.

There was something familial between Keith and Shiro that went almost as deep as Hunk's relationship with Lance. He might be the only one who noticed it, but Hunk knew that somehow Keith and Shiro had known each other before all this. The way that Keith had been ready to rescue and bring Shiro to safety without hesitation, after they crash landed; the way Keith and Shiro seemed to constantly understand each other's flying and fighting styles; the way Keith always knew when Shiro was at his limit and vice versa.

Don't get him wrong, Hunk knew that the entire team was becoming something more than teammates and learning everything there was to know about each other. But there was something different about Shiro and Keith.

Something that reminded Hunk of Lance and himself.

"I used my helmet, through my computer, in order to track where the signal from Keith's helmets were coming from, by the comm devices. From there I tracked the exact coordinates and location of where the helmet is, which is where my father and brother are." Pidge explained impatiently. Hunk swallowed at the uneasy tension in Pidge's posture and the wary look in Shiro's eyes.

"Was Keith with them?" Hunk decided to ask while Allura rubbed her temples.

"His helmet was, meaning that Keith is in a cell with them. They knew him, so he's gotta be alive." Pidge nodded, already moving towards Allura and her controls. Allura sighed, causing Coran to think thoughtfully. It was a delicate situation that needed to be approached with care.

"But...did you actually speak to Keith?" Hunk was genuinely curious and just wanted to know that their friend was alright. He noticed the way that Shiro's hands had clenched at his sides and the way that Lance avoided eye contact. That was never a good sign.

"Well no." Pidge frowned.

"Then how can you really be sure that Keith is still alive?" Allura folded her arms over her chest. She hated to be the one to ask all the hard questions, but from experience, she knew someone had to when it came to dealing with emotional situations.

"Of course he's alive!" Lance bit out, for once not grinning or trying to flirt with Allura. Allura sighed.

“His helmet is with my dad. There’s no way it would be if he wasn’t.” Pidge argued. They were tapping their foot against the floor out of impatience. Time was running against them and the longer they sat around arguing, the less chance they had to save the others. They were *this* close to finding their family and they were *not* about to give up.

“Not necessarily.” Hunk muttered sadly. Pidge and Lance both glared sharply, causing Hunk to nervously flinch and rub his hands together. Upon seeing this, Shiro’s eyes nodded and he set a gentle hand on Hunk’s shoulder. The gesture was meant to be calming, as he rubbed smaller circles in Hunk’s shoulder, to which Hunk greatly appreciated.

“Hunk’s right guys and you need to look at this, as we would mission.” The words coming off Shiro’s tongue felt like ash and he wanted to throw up. The thought of him *denying* Keith being alive made his own stomach churn. “Keith’s helmet being with your dad and Matt just means that at one point Keith was brought there. However, he *didn’t* contact us, he *didn’t* speak to us and Matt and your dad never actually told us where he was. For all we know, Keith could be all the way on Zarkon’s ship by now. This doesn’t mean that Keith is still on this ship.” The untold message was clear as day in Shiro’s words.

This doesn’t mean that Keith is still alive.

“But it also doesn’t mean he isn’t!” Pidge cried. Shiro nodded.

“That’s true. He could have been moved.”

“What if they’re preparing him for the arena? *Dios mio*, what if they’re making him fight in the arena? *Y si van a matarlo?*” Lance gripped at the hairs on the side of his head, eyes widening with each thought. Hunk could feel his own nerves beginning to rise in sync with Lance. Before Lance could panic full-blown, Shiro had set his metallic hand on Lance’s shoulder and squeezed tightly.

“Lance. Enough.”

“But Lance is right!” Pidge swore. “What if they are fighting *right now* and so are my dad and brother? That’s why we have to rescue them, *now!*” Pidge could feel their entire body beginning to tremble. They ignored the concerned looks sent their way before turning to Allura. “Allura, you said that it’s the code of Voltron to help *anyone* in need, no matter how little or many. Well, as Voltron’s duty, we need to rescue them.”

“Ah, I hate to be the bearer of bad news and break it to you, but do you remember the *last* time we tried to take on a Galra ship?” Hunk protested, shaking Shiro’s hand off his shoulder in order to step closer to Pidge. He understood that they were hurting, confused and lost right now. He got they had the right to be upset, but they weren’t thinking rationally and that was their thing. “You want us to go up against another one, when we can’t even form Voltron this time?!”

“Yes! It’s our duty to protect them!” Pidge hissed, glaring darkly at their friend.

“Yeah, but we can’t do that if we waste it dying to save people that might not even be there!” Hunk snapped, feeling all the tension and anxiety exploding from them. Lance and Shiro were both surprised by Hunk’s display of action. Normally, the kind and soft-spoken member of the team never argued like this, unless it was truly bothering him.

“But you’d rather we be cowards and leave them behind? Leave Keith behind?” Pidge said, puffing out their chest and taking a step closer to Hunk.

“We don’t even know if Keith’s there! What if he’s not, then when your *family* is saved, will you say it’s illogical to attack another ship to save only Keith?” Hunk argued hotly, and Pidge’s eyes widened. A look of betrayal crossed over their face, before it returned to a look of fury.

“We can’t just give up!” Lance had then decided to intervene, by shaking away from Shiro and storming towards Hunk and standing beside Pidge. “We didn’t give up on *Shay* and her people, but you want to give up on *Keith*?”

Hunk’s expression twisted painfully. “That’s not fair! I’m not saying that!” Hunk cried, but Pidge and Lance weren’t hearing it.

“Right. You’re too scared to fight for what’s right.” Pidge snorted.

“Pidge!” Shiro hissed.

“Well, you’re thinking too emotionally. All you care about really is *saving your family*. *Not Keith!*” Hunk snapped, feeling his eyes grow wet. Pidge swallowed thickly and Lance’s eyes widened.

“Hunk is correct.” Allura took a small step to stand beside Hunk and Shiro felt his heart sink. Allura had been the only other one he thought would be able to break this fight apart. “You’re thinking with your emotions rather than logically. Just as Keith might not be there, the same could be said about your family, Pidge. They might not be there and then what? What will be worth the risk?” Pidge stumbled over their words with a heavy heart. But Lance kept a firm hand on their back.

“There are prisoners! Hundreds of prisoners to save!” Pidge finally shouted. A deadly silence fell over the room, and Shiro closed his eyes.

“Shiro knows what those ships are like! There are prisoners being kept there and used as *food* for their arena. They’re being slaughtered.” The room felt as if the temperature had dropped at least ten degrees, in Shiro’s mind. He could feel the smallest of trembles in his arms and his breath hitched.

“Well yes.” Allura responded.

“Then that’s our mission. We save the prisoners. If...If my family isn’t there then we still save the prisoners.” Pidge finally said softly. Shiro took a deep breath, willing to push the sounds of a roaring crowd and screams away from him.

“And Keith?” Hunk asked softly.

Lance’s eyes dropped to the floor. “Same thing. If...if Keith isn’t there, we leave. With the prisoners.” He said tiredly and Shiro opened his eyes, to see everyone’s demeanor had changed.

Allura rubbed a hand over her face. “Shiro?”

His throat itched. “They’re right. It’s our job to protect the galaxy. If we can’t stop Zarkon, then we must save these people. It’s the least we can do.” Shiro agreed with lips pressed together firmly. “And if Pidge’s family is there, then they come with us. If not...we leave. No hesitation.” Shiro’s eyes locked onto Pidge’s for a second, seeing their pained emotions with in them, before Pidge nodded.

“And Keith?” Allura asked for reassurance.

Even though it burned to say, Shiro replied without hesitation. “And if we can’t find Keith, then we leave.”

x.x.V.x.x

Present

“We need to get out of here and to the escape ships.” Hunk replied to Pidge, barely heard over the sound of the blaring alarms, once Shiro and Lance had run out of the room.

“Where are Shiro and Lance?” Allura asked sharply over their comms. Hunk knew that Allura was more than likely, already in the command station of the ship (he’d rather not ask what she had done to any guards in her way; no doubt it was bad).

“Apparently, Lance and Shiro saw Keith.” Hunk heard Allura’s strangled gasp over the comm, while he scanned the small room they were currently locked in. “But...Keith isn’t doing too good right now.” Hunk hadn’t actually *seen* Keith like Lance and Shiro, but just looking at their horrified faces were enough to know that whatever was going on with Keith, was bad.

Real bad.

Please let Keith be okay.

“And they’re going after him? Both of them?” Allura said, before grunting. Hunk cringed at the sound of a guard crying out before silence.

“Ah, yeah. At first Lance ran off, and then Shiro followed him. I don’t know Allura, I think it’s going to take both of them to save Keith.” Hunk decided to not mention the bad feeling in his gut. He turned towards Pidge who was whispering furiously to their father and brother. Matt was leaning heavily on his father and Hunk could see some blood dripping on the floor around them.

“Fine. You and Pidge need to get what prisoners you have to the escape pods. Coran is ready to open a worm hole on your signal. I’m almost to the captain’s control room. From there I will open the remaining cells. Hunk, you find them and lead them back to Pidge and the escape pods. Since *someone* smashed their comm device, we’ll have to rely on Lance for communication between him and Shiro.” Hunk snickered at the disappointed tone in Allura’s voice.

“Roger that. Shiro and I are on the run.” Lance’s voice was heavy and out of breath when he spoke up. “We’ll contact should anything go wrong. Shiro says, once we’ve got Keith we’ll meet Hunk by the prisoners.”

“Ten-four!” Hunk grinned.

“Dude, do you even know what that means?”

“...Roger?”

“Focus!” Allura’s snap put Hunk back in his place and he shoved his way towards the doors. Prisoners of all alien races cowered away from Hunk while he observed the doors.

“Pidge, I need you up here.” Hunk called. He turned to see Pidge still speaking with Matt. There was a hesitant look in their eyes but once Matt was securely against their father, Pidge sprinted to the doors by Hunk. “Do you think you can get these doors open? I think they’re too solid for my bayard and there’s no way everyone can get through the air ducts.”

Pidge took a moment to observe the doors, before turning to look at the control panel beside the door. Hunk waited in anticipation while Pidge used their intelligence to no doubt find a way to rewire and program the doors to open. He began to smile when Pidge's eyes brightened and they raised their hand. Although, their bayard formed in their hands, much to Hunk's confusion, and soon Pidge had smashed the electrical blade clean through the control panel. Hunk's face turned ashen and he felt as if his soul had just left his body.

That's it. Pidge has finally cracked.

However, the surprises kept coming and soon the doors were sliding open into a long hallway. Hunk could actually feel his mouth drop open while Pidge grinned gleefully.

"There you go." They said before racing back towards their father and brother. Hunk took another second to stare at the open doors, before rumbling came from the group of prisoners.

"Alright!" Hunk laughed to himself. "Pidge stay in the rear and make sure no one falls behind. Cover our backs too. I'll take the front." Hunk could feel sweat on his hands, under his gloves, when he formed his bayard cannon in his hands. After checking the halls for guards, Hunk turned back towards the group of prisoners.

"Alright, listen up. We are here to rescue you from Zarkon. We're taking you to the escape ships. Now, anything that *anyone* can grab as a weapon would be super helpful, thank you. Now, follow me and please try to keep up." Without waiting for an answer, Hunk made his way into the hallway. He could hear the prisoners following, and the sounds of tearing metal apart (hopefully they were grabbing something to use as weapons?).

"Allura. Which way to the ships? Left or right?" Hunk asked nervously.

"Left, dear Frodo." Lance snickered before Allura had the chance to respond. Hunk sighed.

"Shut up Lance. It's actually right, Hunk." Allura sounded none too impressed by Lance's joke and Hunk couldn't help but feel for her. With a nod, he began to walk down the hall. They made it about three turns before their peace was ruined and chaos started.

As he turned the corner, Hunk caught sight of six heavily armed Galra guards, before quickly back pedaling. A couple had laser guns while the others had some sort of sword in their hands. *Oh no, oh no no no no no no. What do I do? What do I do?* Hunk jumped when he felt shots being fired at the wall he was hiding behind and angry shouts from the guards and Hunk could feel the panic beginning to seep in.

Hunk knew he wasn't a leader. Hell, he wasn't even really a pilot. Just a mechanic.

He didn't know how to take control of a situation or think up plans on the fly. Why, sometimes he barely knew what he was going to do that day. Though, to be fair, when you're fleeing from an evil alien race, it was hard to know exactly your daily plans.

What would Shiro do? Or as Lance would state: WWSD?

Hunk bit his lip while glancing down at the prisoner closest to him, before his heart dropped to the floor. The prisoner wasn't any taller than his waist and couldn't weigh more than 40 pounds. However, this prisoner wasn't of a smaller alien race, similar to the ones on Ares. Rather, it was small because it was a *child*.

The fish-like alien *child* huddle closer to Hunk, wincing at every blaster shot and shout

made. Behind them, Hunk saw an entire group of similar, small, *children* also huddled. For a moment, Hunk felt as if he couldn't breathe when the reality of the situation hit him.

Zarkon wasn't going to stop until *everything* was destroyed.

Even children.

There was nothing that could stop him or interfere with his plans, and the only way to end this war was to kill Zarkon.

Hunk's nostrils flared as he pushed the alien child behind him.

Then he turned around the corner and fired his bayard.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro's eyes narrowed when the two guards, who had been dragging the Galra (*no, it's Keith*) back to his cell, exited a cell. The alarms still blared loudly, with the lights dimmed, but it was enough to keep Lance and Shiro out of sight and out of mind. The guards ran straight past their hiding point, before turning down an empty hallway. Shiro glanced over his shoulder, noting the eager expression on Lance's face before rolling his eyes.

"Come on, follow me. Watch our backs." Shiro whispered, already moving out of their hiding spot. His eyes constantly scanned the hallway in front of them and the doors surrounding them, while Lance kept his back pressed against Shiro's, with his bayard in hand.

Shiro felt his chest tighten when a single cell door came into view.

It was the only door along the entire, dark hallway, with nothing but a slit for an opening. His steps became shorter and shorter as they came closer to the door. Shiro knew he'd only felt this *frightened* once before.

When he had escaped Zarkon.

While Shiro still couldn't remember *how* he escaped, he did remember the fear that coursed through him before landing on Earth. He remembered how terrified he was of being captured by the Galra and sentenced to more, unexplainable torture. That same terror ran through him, the closer and closer they got to Keith.

Keith...

Shiro stopped right in front of the cell door, feeling his heart pumping harshly in his throat. Lance nearly bumped into Shiro, but managed to catch himself beforehand. He looked over his shoulder and his eyes widened at sight of the door. Immediately, he spun around and lowered his gun.

"Is this his cell? This where they're keeping him?" Lance whispered, trying to find any other cells or doors. He found it strange that Keith's cell would be so isolated from everyone else. That never meant anything good.

"I think so." Shiro swallowed, glancing up at the opening on the door.

"Well, then what are we waiting for? Use your magical robo-arm to open it up and let's get him out!" Lance grinned, patting Shiro on the back. Still Shiro didn't move. "Shiro?" Lance frowned at his friend's lack of movement, before his lips formed an 'o' shape.

“Oh.” He said causing Shiro to blink. “You wanna make sure Keith is in there right? I got you. Keith? Hey, Keith buddy! It’s Lance and Shiro! We’re here to save you! Buddy?”

An uncomfortable silence fell over the two.

Lance felt his smile wobble for a split second. Shiro felt his chest squeeze painfully. “Keith?”

Lance attempted to step forward, even closer to the door than Shiro was and that was when Shiro saw it.

A flash of yellow eyes.

Lance, however, was not fast enough to see it. Instead, he yelped when the door suddenly gave an enormous lurch, as if a train had attempted to push through the door. He bounced back off the door, falling ungracefully onto his butt. The door gave another thunderous jerk and riveted on its sockets. Lance’s eyes widened when he caught side of yellow eyes boring down at him and the door gave another jerk.

Soon, animalistic snarls and growls came from within the room. None of it sounded even remotely like English, or *human*.

“Keith?” Lance squeaked.

BAM!

He jumped to his feet when the door gave another jerk, before hiding his body behind Shiro’s. Even Shiro took half a step back when the door look at if it would come off at any second. The eyes flashed in and out of sight, through the hole in the door, all the while, growls emitted from the room.

BAM!

“What’s happening? Is that Keith? Are you sure?” Lance shakily asked, unable to look away from the glowing yellow eyes looking his way. Shiro held an arm between the door and him and Lance with narrowed eyes.

“I’m not sure. I can’t really see in the cell.” Shiro admitted.

BAM!

“K-Keith’s probably mad right now. M-Maybe we should wait, until he’s calmed down?” Lance tried, only to earn a disappointed look from Shiro. Lance instantly hung his head in shame. There was no feeling in the world that compared to the feeling of disappointed Shiro.

“No. We need to make sure that this is Keith.” Shiro said, ignoring the panic in his head at the sound of a Galra snarling in his direction. He resisted the urge to flinch every time the Galra slammed its body against the door.

“Okay...” Lance’s voice became higher and higher.

BAM!

“Stay behind me. If he attacks I’ll hit him first. *Don’t shoot* unless absolutely necessary.” Shiro said, giving Lance a gentle push away from him.

“What counts as ‘absolutely necessary’ Shiro? Would you consider it to be A) Keith gnawing at my arm or B) Keith ripping us to shreds?”

“*Lance.*”

“I’m being serious here. Mullet-head or not, I’d rather no one dies.”

“It’ll be fine Lance. We have this under control.” Shiro admitted quietly. He didn’t want to mention that he *did not*, in fact, feel like they had this. Rather this was the further from having it, he could feel. “Just stay behind me. I’m opening the door now.”

Shiro reached over (*his hands only trembling a bit*) to press his robotic hand against the control panel to the right of the door. Honestly, Shiro didn’t know if his plan would properly work, but so far his arm hadn’t failed them.

Yet.

There was a loud beep, then a click and suddenly the door was opening. Shiro pulled his arm back, holding it in front of him, while Lance cowered back even further behind him. The door felt like it was dramatically taking even longer to open, as it slid to the side. Shiro then braced himself when the door fully opened to the dark cell inside.

Whatever happens, this is still Keith.

“S-Shiro.” Lance weakly pointed over Shiro’s shoulder to point out the only figure in the dark cell. Shiro’s heart stopped and his eyes widened at the sight before him while Lance shivered.

The figure before them (*Keith?*) towered over both of them, even Shiro who was always known for his height and bulk. His (*Keith?*) glowing yellow eyes narrowed upon sight of Shiro and Lance, before he turned to look *down* at them. At his side (*Keith’s side?*) his hands were more like knives; sharp and bloody from a previous fight.

“Keith?” Lance whispered hoarsely. Shiro’s mouth felt too dry to even speak.

The Galra – *Keith’s* eyes darkened even more and his fingers expanded at his sides. Shiro could barely see the chains that were locked around Keith’s wrists, too focused on the *muzzle* and *collar* around Keith’s face and neck. Two long rows of chains were attached to the collar around his neck and locked into place along the walls of the cell.

While Lance was staring at his (*once?*) friend in horror, Shiro was losing himself in a nightmare.

Keith was no longer in front of him, but instead a Galra soldier with wide, cat-like glowing eyes. Their lips were curled back in a cruel smirk while their laughter rang like shrill screeches in his ears. Shiro’s heart began to race and his pupils dilated.

“Shiro?” Lance finally took his eyes off Keith, who was beginning to pull at the chains around his wrist, to look at Shiro’s frozen form. Lance’s eyes widened when Shiro held his robotic arms out straight, and it slowly began to light up. “Shiro! What are you doing? Don’t attack him unless *absolutely necessary!*” Lance cried out, causing Keith to growl underneath his muzzle. When Shiro’s arm began to vibrate, Lance reached out and pulled him back, just as Keith lunged toward him.

Shiro and Lance tumbled to the ground, when Keith was pulled back by his chains, still snarling and growing more agitated by the second. Still Shiro’s gaze remained on Keith, and Lance

noticed the trembling in his body.

“Shiro! Stop, snap out of this dude! That’s Keith! You can’t hurt him!” Lance cried, scrambling to pull Shiro’s robotic arm back when Shiro gasped. Immediately, Shiro shoved Lance off him but knelt to the ground, clutching his head.

Lance began to panic.

Especially when he could hear a creaking sound coming from Keith’s chains.

“Shiro! Please don’t hurt Keith, he’s our teammate. Our family. You’ll never forgive yourself if you hurt Keith!” Lance pleaded desperately, reaching for his gun. His eyes snapped back to the snarling Keith, when there was another creak from his chains. Once more Keith lunged at them and Lance involuntarily crawled back. “Please Shiro, we need to help Keith!”

Lance nearly screamed when he heard the sound of a chain breaking, followed by another and soon Keith’s arms were free. Keith let out a roar that sent shivers down Lance’s spine.

How was this still our Keith?

“Shiro!” Lance actually did scream when Keith snapped the chains from around his neck as if they were *toothpicks*. The Galra version of their friends huffed before flexing his clawed hands. Then it narrowed his eyes on Lance and Shiro.

He had locked onto his prey.

Keith crouched lowly before pushing off with his feet, claws raised to strike, and he flung himself towards Lance. The gun shook in Lance’s hands, aimed at Keith. Before he could fire though, he felt his body being shoved away from Keith.

Lance grunted upon impact against the wall. Blearily, he looked over at the two figures pushed against each other.

“Keith! Stop, it’s us. Your team.” Shiro grunted, as he pushed his robotic arm against one of Keith’s hands. Keith merely hissed and shoved against Shiro. Though, before Keith could swipe his free hand against Keith, Shiro had twisted his body into Keith and thrown the tall, Galra onto his back.

Keith let out a grunt of pain and Shiro circled around his friend.

“Keith, you need to snap out of this. Please, don’t fight us.” Shiro pleaded. Keith shook his head, growling like an animal and jumping easily to his feet. He crouched, ears twitching when Shiro took a step to the left. Shiro didn’t even want to imagine the look that Keith was making underneath the muzzle.

His friend was muzzled.

Like a feral animal.

“Keith, stop this. Please, we don’t want to fight you. Don’t you remember Lance? Or Shiro?” Shiro tried again, avoiding claws that were coming straight for his face. He ducked down when Keith made to lunge at him, ready to play defense all day if he had to. However, Keith managed to snag Shiro by the ankle and drag the older man to the ground. Shiro felt the breath leave him immediately.

“Shiro!”

Keith’s ears twitched and he snapped his attention straight towards Lance, who was finally back on his feet. Lance jumped in realization, clutching his gun close to his chest.

“Keith! Stop, that’s Shiro! You know Shiro!” Lance cried, unable to move when Keith stepped over Shiro to head towards Lance. Lance could feel his heart vibrating in his throat. “Keith, man, please snap out of it! It’s Shiro and Lance!”

Keith lunged again.

This time his claws dug deep into the metal wall behind Lance, when Lance jumped away. Lance winced at the sound of metal being torn apart under Keith’s claws but he was more focused on the fact that Keith had completely turned his entire body off the wall to push off it with all four limbs.

Lance tripped backwards but still kept himself upright as he dragged Shiro to his feet. Keith let out another roar, while Lance and Shiro made a run down the hall. When Lance looked over his shoulder, he almost screamed again at how *close* Keith was to him.

Instinctively, his body turned while his finger pushed down at the trigger, causing the gun to fire.

Right at Keith.

“Keith!” Lance screamed. Keith’s ears shot up and he hesitated, but it was enough.

Lance watched in horror when the laser beam from his gun hit its target and hit Keith in his side. He could smell burned hair and charred flesh, and heard Keith howl in agony before stumbling back. It was enough to make Lance and Shiro pause to stare at their, now wounded, friend. Shiro’s eyes widened before turning to an ashen Lance.

“I – I didn’t – I didn’t mean to! I – I –” Lance stammered, only to have Shiro grab his shoulder, turn him around and pull him down the hall.

“I know. We need to get back to the others. Keith will follow us if we keep running like this.” Shiro yelled over Keith’s howls. The Galra had once again managed to sprint after his prey, easily closing in the distance between them, while Lance and Shiro sprinted for their lives.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?” Lance yelled but Shiro remained quiet.

Probably not.

“It’s the only plan we have.”

x.x.V.x.x

“Can anyone hear Lance?” Allura’s voice actually sounded worried over the comms. Hunk hissed, crouching behind the wall when another guard fired at him. He counted to two before popping around the wall and firing his cannon at the group of Galra soldiers, watching as they were hit by the blast. He yelled over his shoulder, over the sound of the battle around them, and sprinted forward, tucking one of the alien-children by his side.

The group of prisoners’ follower, some shouting and yelling at guards heading their direction. There were easily more prisoners than guards at the moment, and continuously growing

every time the team stopped. Some prisoners fought with beams or poles against the guards holding swords, easily overpowering the Galra with their numbers. Others kept the children close and huddle together through the battle.

“No. We’re a bit busy Allura.” Pidge’s voice sounded tired and a bit bitter over the comms and Hunk couldn’t exactly blame them. “Last I heard, they found Keith.” In that sentence Hunk could actually hear the relief in their voice.

“I’m worried.” Allura admitted, as she fought against another Galra soldier. “Pidge, the escape ships are to your left. Hunk, over a hundred prisoners have just been released from their cells to your right. Get the prisoners to the escape pods. Coran be ready to do as I instructed to open a worm hole.”

“Yes princess!” Pidge, Hunk and Coran saluted.

Through the wreckage and debris, Hunk turned to Pidge when he saw the escape ships in sight (luckily without guards around them). Pidge looked away from their brother and smiled at Hunk.

“You got this big guy! I’ll meet you back here in ten.” They waved and Hunk felt himself smile. For a moment all his worry had disappeared. Just before racing off to find the other prisoners, he knelt down to the fish-like alien-child and smiled.

“You’ll be safe now. Pidge will keep you safe, okay kid?” The child’s lips trembled but it nodded, as if it could understand what he was saying. He gently pushed the kid at a female prisoner and then took off through the middle of the battle, towards the other prisoners.

“This way!” Pidge yelled, letting go of their brother and leaving him against their father. The group of prisoners began to run after Pidge, all crying out (some with actual tears) upon seeing the escape ships. “Get in! Fit as many as you can! Children first.” Pidge commanded, waving a group of prisoners into the first ship. They nodded upon seeing the children being pushed onto the ship, but frowned when they noticed some older prisoners trying to push through.

Quickly, they moved to the next ship and the next and then next, opening them all up. “Get in! There’s more ship! Let’s go!” Pidge cupped their hands over their mouth in order to be heard better. They watched as more prisoners began to push their ways into the escape ships. Running back to the first ship, Pidge noticed the capacity full and no other prisoners getting in. Quickly, the punched in a set of coordinates into the control panel and slammed their hand on the release button. With a whoosh, the ship left the Galra’s atmosphere and floated into space.

“I’ve got one escape ship out, Coran. Two more on their way!” Pidge yelled and released another ship into space.

“Aye, number 5!”

Pidge’s eyes scanned the crowd, as more and more prisoners began piling into the room. *Hunk must have found them. Knew he could do it.* Her eyes froze when they saw their brother and father being pushed *back* from the ships.

“Hey! Hey!” Pidge yelled furiously and shoved their way through the crowd without effort. Another escape ship left the bank and flew into space. “What’s going on?” Pidge grabbed their brother when he stumbled after being shoved aside. Pidge instantly glared at the alien prisoner, who paid them no attention.

“It’s alright, Katie.” Pidge’s father said softly. Pidge swallowed.

“No, it’s not! You need to get onto the ships now.” Their heart began to beat faster when they noticed only three escape ships remained, with one being filled up at the moment. “Come on! You need to follow me.”

They began to drag Matt and their father through the crowds towards the last escape ship that had yet to be open. Upon seeing this, several prisoners began to follow in their direction, all scrambling to get off this ship.

“Get in! Let’s go!” Pidge commanded, ignoring their brother’s look of apprehension.

“Katie, there’s lots of prisoners. Not everyone might get on –” Her father began, only to be stopped by a look of horror by Pidge.

“No! I just got you back, and I’m not losing you again!” Pidge practically screamed and threw her brother and father into the escape ship, just as it began to fill up. Matt fell to the floor while his father attempted to pull him up right, in order to avoid being trampled.

“Katie, then you need to get on the ship with us then! Katie, get on.” Pidge’s father yelled.

Pidge could feel a lump forming in their throat when they were pushed *away* from the ship.

“Katie?”

“I have to wait for my team dad. It’s like you told me, I found my own team; one that I love.” Pidge said. They could see their father’s face twisting into one of regret.

“Pidge?” Matt whispered.

“I can’t leave without my team. *All* of it.”

Matt and his dad shared a horrified look. “You can’t wait for Keith! There’s no saving him Pidge! If you bring him back, you’ll only endanger your team!” Her father yelled. Pidge felt their heart hammering in their chest and their hands curled into fists.

“There’s hope for Keith. No matter what’s happened to him. He’s part of Team Voltron, and we’re *not* leaving without him.”

“Pidge,” Matt sighed. “Keith is not the same as he was. I don’t think he’ll *ever* be the same.”

“Don’t say that!” Pidge’s scream surprised Matt and their dad, causing them to jump. “Don’t you dare tell me to give up on Keith! I – I never gave up on you both and now you’re safe! I can’t give up on Keith – he’s more than a teammate! He’s so much more and we’re not quitting. Not when we can *save* him.”

“You must understand Dad. You were the one who taught me what it meant to be on a team.” Pidge continued softly, watching as their dad sighed to himself. They couldn’t tear their eyes away from the multitude of bruises, cuts and scars that now littered their dad and Matt’s body and it made their stomach roll.

They wondered if this was what Shiro looked like.

If this is what Keith would look like.

“I can’t leave him behind. No matter how far gone he is.”

At this, Pidge stepped out of the escape pod and slammed their hand on the release button. Matt and their father threw themselves against the glass, while Pidge smiled sadly.

“I’ll see you soon.”

x.x.V.x.x

“Lance? Shiro?” Lance looked up to see a light shining at the end of the hallway. As if the heavens above had opened up, and graced him with a person of divine power and beauty. Birds sang. Trees swayed. Rivers flowed and it was beautiful.

“Hunk! Oh man, am I happy to see you!” Lance basically launched himself at Hunk, panting the entire way. He was quick to motion Hunk to keep running after Shiro, who passed them by quickly.

“What are we running from?”

“Keith!”

“Keith?”

“Keith!”

Hunk frowned for a moment, before looking behind him. What he saw made his eyes nearly pop out of his head and immediately caused him to pick up his speed. Behind them, was a Galra with armor loosely falling off him, literally *running along the walls on all fours*. He jumped back and forth from wall to wall, to gain momentum and speed, with eyes blazing in their direction.

“Lance, what is that?! What’s that? Oh my god, what is that?” Hunk yelped when the Galra pushed off against a wall to grab Hunk, but missed him by centimeters. Lance gripped Hunk tighter and maneuvered his body so he could aim behind him. He fired twice at the walls, causing Keith to jump out of the way.

“That, Hunk, is Keith. He’s a bit pissed right now, but when *isn’t* he?” Lance grumbled when Hunk almost dropped him. Shiro glance back, eyes tracking Keith.

“What do you mean?! How is that Keith?! Keith is human, like us!” Hunk cried out nervously, forgetting that his mouth was right next to his ear. He whined when Lance smacked him on the shoulder, only to turn back and fire at the wall by Keith’s feet.

“We know about as much as you do buddy. Somehow, they turned Keith into – *ay, ay Hunk, watch where you’re going* – a Galra. But it’s still Keith.” Lance replied as they twisted a particular corner, where Hunk had to avoid being hit by a robot’s laser gun. Shiro rammed his arm through the robot and powered ahead of Hunk and Lance.

“W – What?” Hunk blinked. “Why’s he attacking us?”

“Ah well see, I think they messed with his memory during this, and well, he kinda, sorta, maybe doesn’t know who we are? And he may want to eat us?” Lance squeaked when Hunk jerked in surprise.

“WHAT?”

“Shh, you’re going to make him even more pissed. Just run towards the escape ships! Move! Move!” Hunk whined as Lance slapped his back but his speed quickened and soon he was keeping up pace with Shiro. He could still hear *Keith’s* growls coming from behind him but he didn’t dare look back. All this information was just making Hunk feel like he was spinning in circles.

“Tell, Pidge,” Shiro said through his fights against Galra soldiers. “To get to the Green Lion. Prepare to get to yours too!” He grunted when flipping a robot over his head and maintaining speed. Hunk took a moment to appreciate the sheer awesomeness of their leader.

Moment over.

“Pidge! Shiro said make it to your lion! Are all the prisoners on board?” Hunk asked.

“No, about ten couldn’t fit.”

“Take some with you and direct the others to Yellow Lion. We’ll take them there!”

“What about Lance and Shiro? And Keith?” Pidge asked.

“We found Keith. Shiro and Lance are taking him to the Black Lion, just go!”

“Alright! I’ll see you outside. Allura, it’s time to leave this ship!” There was a noise of static that Hunk assumed was Allura before everyone cut out. He had no doubt that Allura and Pidge would be just fine without their help – in fact they probably were better off than they were right now, and more capable of getting out of danger. Hunk took a split second to breathe a sigh of relief before he felt something snag onto the collar of his suit.

He let out a cry when he was jerked back and Lance rolled out of his arms. The figure that had grabbed him was jerking him away from Shiro and Lance, with frightening strength. He kicked and squirmed only to come face to face with the muzzled Galra (*Keith*). Hunk’s eyes widened at the bloodthirsty look in his eyes.

“K – Keith? Hey man, you r – remember me? H – Hunk?” Hunk stammered nervously, only earning a snarl from Keith. His grip around Hunk’s collar tightened until his claws begin to penetrate through the suit. “K – Keith!”

Keith raised one hand, ready to strike at Hunk’s face, only for a blue blast of light to hit Keith’s clawed hand. Instantly, Keith howled, throwing Hunk aside and clutching his hand. Scrambling to his feet and pulling out his own weapon, Hunk looked to see Lance and Shiro both standing defensively away from Keith. Lance’s gun was pointing at Keith and Shiro’s hand was glowing.

“Keith, don’t make me do this. Please don’t make me hurt you anymore.” Lance croaked. If Hunk looked closer he could see Lance’s hands shaking against the gun. Keith merely howled and held his hand close to his chest while Hunk grimaced.

Keith was hurt.

Because of them.

Because Lance shot him.

Shot Keith.

Keith.

“Please Keith. Come back to us.” Lance pleaded. Beside him, Shiro began to circle towards Keith with a look of pure agony on his own face. Hunk swallowed.

This wasn't how it was supposed to be.

“Please Keith, Lance doesn't want to hurt you. None of us do.” Shiro said softly. His eyes locked onto Hunk, while Keith curled in on himself, panting harshly. Slowly, he tilted his head towards where the Yellow Lion was waiting and several prisoners running to. With a firm nod, Hunk inched away from Keith, wary when Keith's ears twitched and a growl came from his chest.

“Come home, Keith.” Shiro continued once Hunk was safely heading towards his lion. He could still feel Lance lingering behind him. The Black Lion was nearby, waiting for Shiro to be ready to leave. As was the Blue Lion.

“Lance. Get to Blue. Now.”

“Shiro, no –”

“Now.” Lance's breath hitched at Shiro's words, while Keith snarled at them. Though, he didn't make a move to attack again. With a heavy heart and wet eyes, Lance spun around and raced back to his Lion.

Remember your family Keith.

Now, all that was left was Shiro and Keith. Shiro's arm continued to glow, ready to strike if need be, while Keith's eyes tracked Shiro's every move. Keith had yet to release his wounded hand, but his chest heaved with heavy breaths and his growls grew in volume.

“Keith...”

Shiro only had a second to respond before Keith had lunged at him. His claws scrapped against Shiro's cheek when Shiro jerked back. For a second his eyes met Keith's and both of his yellow eyes widened. Then a snarl ripped through Keith's throat and Shiro's lips thinned. With one push, he slammed his robotic hand against Keith's gut before shoving Keith onto his back into the ground. Keith whined in pain, blearily looking up at his captor above him.

Shiro straddled Keith, watching as Keith's eyes slowly became glassy and unfocused. Then he watched as Keith, closed his eyes and his body became limp. With his head hanging, Shiro felt the Black Lion entering a hole in the ship and land beside him and Keith. The lion rumbled to acknowledge Shiro's pain and heavy heart, while Shiro stared down at the battered form of Keith.

We're going to fix this Keith, I promise.

With that, Shiro pulled Keith into Black and took off through the worm hole created by Allura and Coran.

“Let's go home Keith.”

I see the face of someone that I've loved and lost.

Chapter End Notes

Shiro loves you baby.

Don't worry. So, what did you guys think? I actually don't have much to say, probs because I'm tryna figure out the next chapter, and stressed because I'm so busy. But I'd love to hear your thoughts! As always, every comment, kudo, bookmark or support to this story is loved and makes me so happy! Thank you guys so much for loving this story to the extent you have!

Thanks and peaceout!

I Couldn't Stand the Person Inside Me

Chapter Notes

Hey, hey, hey guys, guess what time it is?? Update time, and boy have I spoiled you this time. When I was all said and finished with this chapter, I realized it was nearly 10,000 words so enjoy this little treat! 10,000 is a lucky number for Voltron :).

So, parts of this chapter were inspired by ideas given to me by two lovely reviewers, so they might recognize some plot points in this chapter and the next. Thank you to Cheshire and Silverheartlugia2000 for your ideas and sharing them with me! I hope you enjoy them.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I can't tell if this is reality or a dream.

I can't tell if you're real or not.

x.x.V.x.x

“He’s escaped. Along with all the other prisoners.” Haggar’s voice was like ice, from the center of the room. His eyes were glowing red and her lips were curled back in a cruel snarl. Purple sparks occasionally sprouted from her finger tips out of anger.

Though, Zarkon didn’t seem to be sharing her anger, nor her concerns at all. In fact, the leader appeared to be far too *calm* after everything that had happened. Honestly, it was beginning to irritate Haggar.

“You don’t seem surprised.” Haggar hissed while Zarkon continued to gaze out their window into space. “I would expect you to be a bit concerned, considering we’ve lost out *best soldier* and those *humans* destroyed another ship.”

“If that ship’s captain and team could not defend themselves from four measly humans and two Alteans, who had been asleep for 10,000 years, then death is what they deserve.” Zarkon finally spoke up. Haggar clamped her mouth shut, unable to argue with her leader. “It’s a disgrace to the Galra Empire.”

“As that may be. We’ve lost the Red Paladin. He was our only chance to capturing Voltron.” Haggar said quietly. She missed the smirk that was growing on Zarkon’s lips, in favor of watching the shaking Galra guards beside them.

“But this is exactly what I wanted.” Haggar frowned; her lightning stopping completely and the sparks freezing. With working with Zarkon as long as she had, she found herself often left in the dark about certain circumstances or plans. Such as Zarkon’s backup plan, *should* her creations fail.

“I want *Keith* to be with his team now.” Zarkon grinned, turning around and exiting the room. His metal boots clacked against the floor and Haggar slowly followed after him. Her

lightning had dissolved into small sparks of light by then. “*Keith* belongs to the Galra Empire now. No one else. He will kill those humans and then we will take back Voltron.”

Haggar’s face twisted into a sneer. “And the Galaxy will be ours.”

“Of course.” Zarkon cackled.

“He will be the death of his friends.”

x.x.V.x.x

Lance was nervous.

Scratch that, Lance was actually beyond nervous.

He was so nervous that he hadn’t stopped bouncing from foot to foot, all the while, ignoring the mass of prisoners that were currently on board. In fact, the large number of prisoners on board the ship with them was only adding to the anxiety he was currently feeling.

Hunk, Allura and Coran were all helping to settle the prisoners in groups and deal with the wounded first. There were at least over a hundred prisoners on board right now, and Lance had no idea what any of their motives were right now. He’d never felt this worried before, especially having grown up in a crowded household, surrounded by family and friends. Even on Ares he hadn’t worried about the amount of people.

But, maybe because of recent events, Lance was starting to get cautious?

Lance could see Pidge, just a few feet away with their brother and father, while they wrapped up the injury on their brother’s leg. For a moment, Lance felt a pang of jealousy in his heart.

Pidge was reunited with their family, while Lance couldn’t even tell if he would ever see his again. Of course, he was happy for Pidge (he couldn’t imagine living with thinking that his own brother or father were dead for a year) and it warmed him to see his youngest friend so happy and carefree. They’d been trying so hard to stay brave, for a long time, and now they didn’t have to be anymore.

But Lance missed his own family.

His missed his mother.

His father.

His sisters and brothers.

His abuelita.

He missed home.

Lance just wanted to go home. He wanted this war to be over. He wanted his friends to be safe and his family to be with him. He wanted Shiro to stop hurting and Hunk to be happy. He wanted Pidge to smile and most of all: He wanted Keith back.

God, how he missed Keith.

Shiro was still flying Keith into the ship, unwilling to let him near any of the prisoners.

He feared of their reactions to Keith: *The Champion*, and he feared that Keith could potentially be a danger to them.

Lance could still smell the stench of burning flesh and the image of Keith being shot by Lance would forever haunt his mind. The pained howl from Keith echoed in Lance's head until it shook him to his bones. When he closed his eyes, he could still see the betrayed look in Keith's yellow eyes sent his way.

More than once, Lance had thrown up all the contents of his stomach upon realizing that he had *shot Keith. His friend*. It left a bitter taste in his mouth and a harsh feeling in his stomach. Once Keith was better, the first thing Lance would do would be to: punch the guy.

Hard.

Right in the jaw.

Then he was going to hug Keith until he complained and then apologize for shooting him. He hoped there wouldn't be any tears or anger between the two, but he never knew with the way their friendship went.

From the corner of his eye, Lance noticed the Black Lion *finally* landing in their doc. It was a separate from, far enough away from everyone that should anything happen. Lance hoped that nothing would actually happen.

They'd had enough excitement to last a lifetime.

Without anyone noticing, Lance slipped away from the group of prisoners and sprinted to the hanger. He was sure that Shiro probably argue against him being near Keith at the moment, but Lance could care less. He *needed* to do this.

Before Shiro could even exit Black, with Keith still lying on the ground, unconscious, he noticed Lance waiting at the opening of the mouth of the lion. Though, he was a bit annoyed to see Lance so carelessly thinking about his own safety, he was touched to see he was the first to greet them. Lance and Keith's relationship had been rocky from day one, so it came as a surprise to see Lance obviously worried for Keith.

It didn't go unwanted.

"How is he?" Lance decided to ask before Shiro could use his "leader-voice" and force Lance to meet. Shiro let out a sigh, looking back at Keith's slumped form.

"Unconscious. He passed out when he hit the floor, just before Black picked us up. He's been out ever since." Shiro admitted, unsurprised when Lance immediately climbed into the Black Lion and stood beside them. The two stared quietly at the unfamiliar form in front of them, still unable to believe that this was now their friend.

"Do you think it's reversible?" Lance finally asked. Shiro blinked in shock and turned at Lance. He could see dark bags that were hidden under Lance's eyes, from the many sleepless nights that Shiro knew all too well. Lance's face was all more drawn than usual and looked sunken in, from what he guessed was because of stress. Lance's eyes remained on Keith and not once did he turn to face Shiro.

"Does it make any difference?" Shiro decided to ask, rather than answer. He watched as Lance frowned and turned to him.

“That’s rude. Answering a question with a question.” Lance practically pouted at Shiro’s amused shrug.

“I’m serious. Does it matter? He’ll always be Keith, right? Human or not?”

Lance’s frown deepened. He knew exactly what Shiro was trying to get at and he knew exactly what he should say. What he *wanted* to say.

“I don’t think it’s that simple Shiro.” Lance sighed while Shiro’s posture tensed. “He’s scared some of our team. I have no doubt that mullet-head is always there and always will be, but he attacked us, Shiro. He attacked *you*. That’s bound to make some people uneasy; especially Allura.”

“I know.” *I don’t.*

“I’m not say we won’t treat him as Keith, because he’ll always be that obnoxious, know-it-all, hot-headed brat that we all love. But it won’t be the same if he doesn’t *remember* us.” Lance replied and Shiro swallowed thickly.

“I get it.” *I wish I didn’t.*

“Let’s get him to Allura. Maybe she and Pidge can run some diagnostic scans on him.” Shiro sighed, feeling the exhaustion starting to creep up on him. Falling into his bed for a *month*, sounded good to him right now.

“Sure.” Just as Lance began to move, he froze with Shiro raising his arm in warning. His eyes widened when Keith’s body began to sit upright and a low growl escaped his lips.

Then, Keith’s yellow eyes locked onto his teammates.

x.x.V.x.x

“Let’s get him to Allura. Maybe she and Pidge can run some diagnostic scans on him.”

“Sure.”

Who are you?

There was movement.

Then the sound of a heartbeat. Thump-thump, thump-thump.

No, two heartbeats. Two life forces.

Da-thump-thump. Da-thump-thump.

The smell of sweat. Of fear.

Two creatures stood in his way. Blocking his path.

The sound of breathing; far too heavy and loud.

The smell of metal. What is this? Metal and energy.

There was so much energy around him. It was dark and suffocating, like it wanted him to choke on it. A growl in his ears.

Who are you?

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro's first instinct was to push Lance behind his back, so that his own body was between Keith and Lance. His second instinct was to help Keith off the ground. However, he refrained from going over to Keith by standing in front of Lance.

"Lance, stay back. We can't afford to shoot inside the castle." Shiro whispered, hoping that Keith was still too groggy to hear them. Unfortunately, another side effect of turning into a Galra meant that Keith's hearing had dramatically improved. With a twitch of his ears, he could hear even Shiro breathing.

"Keith, buddy, it's Shiro and Lance. You don't want to attack us." Shiro held both of his hands up, in what he hoped was a calming gesture when Keith dragged himself to his feet. Keith's arms hung limply at his side and his legs trembled. He had to hunch down in order to keep from hitting the roof of Black. Shiro moved them away from Keith so that he and Lance were now the closest to the opening.

Keith snarled.

"Keith, please don't. We want to help you. I promise, no one's going to hurt you again." Shiro continued softly. So far, Keith had yet to try anything other than stand up and snarl at them. Though, Shiro wasn't sure if that was because he was beginning to remember or because he had just awoken.

Keith's eyes narrowed.

Shiro's own eyes widened for a split second before he realized what Keith was planning. Just as he tried to shove Lance back, Keith had leapt straight for them, with claws raised. It was too late.

They wouldn't be fast enough.

To Shiro and Lance's surprise and horror, though, Keith froze in midair, before bright and electrifying shocks coursed through his body. His howled and twitched in air as he was shocked over and over, ripping into his skin and bones. Keith howled painfully, twitching in midair until he was dropped to the ground. The shocks had ceased but his body still twitched from the sudden shock of energy. Shiro swallowed when he realized the Keith was once again unconscious. He and Lance stumbled when Black tipped their head and dropped all of them to the floor and out of its mouth.

Black? Was that you?

The Lion then let out a deafening and mighty roar, causing Lance and Shiro to cover their eyes. Soon enough, Allura and the others had come sprinting in the room, to find Shiro holding onto a terrified Lance, and an unconscious Galra version of their teammate.

x.x.V.x.x

Pain. Pain. Pain.

It hurt so much. Why does it hurt?

Why does it always hurt?

So much pain.

Make it stop! Make it stop.

Make it stop.

Always so much pain.

Why?

Make it stop.

MAKE.

IT.

STOP!

x.x.V.x.x

Allura's frowned only deepened and Coran felt the need to warn her about the early signs of wrinkles if she kept that up. However, he refrained from speaking up upon noticing the abnormal amount of tension in the room. He couldn't blame them, as he wasn't feeling particularly cheery himself. Not after what they had witnessed.

No one had expected Shiro to return with a Galra soldier, who looked far worse for wear than any of them did. No one had expected Shiro *and* Lance to protect the Galra soldier, and stand over his unconscious body when Allura and Pidge made the move to attack. No one expected Shiro to explain that the Galra soldier was *Keith*.

How in Quiznak, did this happen?

"It's certainly Keith. There's too many similarities in his DNA for it to not be, but it's not completely the same." Allura rubbed her forehead, while pressing a few buttons on the healing pod in front of them. They'd had to use one similar with Sendak to keep this Galra unconscious and to accommodate his height. "His DNA basic structure is the same. I would have originally thought this to maybe be a clone, but it seems as if there is DNA missing, rather than added which is usually the case with clones."

"What do you mean?" asked Pidge.

"It's strange." Allura murmured and pulled up a screenshot of an old file of Keith's DNA and the new one that had just run. "The basic DNA structures match up almost perfect with his old structures," She pushed the two screens together until they were on top of each other. Pidge was the one looking closely at the two structures, while Shiro tried to keep up. "However, this structure is of Galra DNA. It makes sense for the structure to be this way, because almost 98% of his DNA in now Galran. But if you look at his old structure, it almost looks as if he had Galra DNA before."

"That's not possible." Lance argued immediately. "I think I would have noticed if he wasn't a mutated space alien." Pidge, Hunk and even Shiro nodded in agreement.

"I know. That is why I am confused." Allura said and pulled both versions of Keith's DNA apart. "Right now, almost all of Keith's DNA has been genetically modified or mutated to represent Galra's. I have no doubt that they used Galra cells and DNA in their...experiments to do this. If they truly altered Keith's DNA sequence to turn him into a Galra, without destroying the

original structure, then the Galra have more power than we originally thought.”

“That still wouldn’t explain why it makes us think that Keith had Galra DNA before.” Pidge rubbed their chin thoughtfully. “While 98% of Keith’s DNA is Galran, at least 2% of the strands remain normal. If I had to take a guess, I would say that Zarkon was trying to recreate a pureblooded Galra soldier with Keith.”

“If he can do this with any species, then Zarkon will have enough control to build a terrifying army.” Allura chewed on her bottom lip. Shiro noticed her apprehension and folded his arms over his chest.

“Even so, Voltron will still be able to defeat him.” Shiro reassured. “He’ll need to get his hands on Voltron before he even attempts this if he wants to be successful.” Allura nodded, still looking worried but she turned her attention to Keith’s prone form.

“So, that 2% of his DNA, or whatever, it’s human right?”

“I assume so. It looks like the portions of original DNA from Keith.” Pidge nodded and adjusted their glasses. “It looks like Zarkon was unsuccessful in creating a complete and pure Galra soldier.” Hunk’s eyes brightened at this and he clasped his hands together.

“Does this mean we can reverse the effects? Use this DNA to reverse the Galra mutation in Keith and return him to normal?” Hunk excitedly asked. Pidge felt a heavy lump in their throat and instead focused their eyes on Keith’s heartbeat readings. Allura caught sight of this and swallowed.

“Unfortunately no.” She winced when she noticed *everyone’s* face falling. “The technology that Zarkon used in one I have never seen before. It would take us *years* to even begin to develop it and understand what Zarkon did. And without that technology, we can’t recreate what Zarkon has done.”

“Then we should steal it!” Lance said weakly.

“It’s not that simple, Lance.” Allura rolled her eyes. “From these scans, there’s also a hint of magic lingering around Keith. I have no doubt that *Haggar* helped in mutating Keith’s cells and DNA. If that’s the case, then we will *never* be able to reverse it unless she can.”

Lance’s bottom lip wobbled dangerously.

“Our focus should be on letting Keith heal.”

“Not in a pod.”

Allura stared at Shiro’s sudden statement and saw Shiro looking at Keith’s form with narrowed eyes. His jaw was clenched tightly and his hands were still folded over his chest. She was rather shocked by his outburst but decided to ask him about it.

“What?”

“We cannot leave Keith in one of the cryogenic pods. That might heal him physically, but not mentally.” Shiro responded tersely.

“Shiro, you do realize that Keith is a danger, right? He attacked you and Lance!” Allura protested, with Coran backing her up at her side.

“The safest place for everyone on this ship and for Keith, is for Keith to remain unconscious in these pods.” Coran added.

“Until when? Are you saying we should lock him up, like a prisoner, forever?” Shiro countered, unable to look away from Keith to face Allura and his team.

“Of course not. But right now, he’s a danger and we can’t let him loose around the ship where he could *kill* any one of us!”

“He’s not going to kill us!” Lance shot back, feeling his anger beginning to boil. He glared darkly at Allura, who didn’t back down from the meager human. Instead, she shot him one of her own nasty glares.

“How do you know that? From what it sounds like, if it wasn’t for Shiro rendering him unconscious, Keith would have slaughtered him, you *and* Hunk.” Allura growled. Hunk’s face immediately paled.

“I wouldn’t say slaughtered...”

“Keith is a danger.” Allura ignored the meek paladin and pushed herself into Shiro’s space. Shiro finally had to look away from Keith in order to look down at Allura. His jaw tightened. “He needs to remain here for everyone’s safety. So he can heal.”

“How do you expect him to heal when he’s rendered unconscious? His mind was torn apart, Allura! You don’t understand.” Shiro snapped back. “What we need is to remind him of who we are.”

“That won’t work. You’ve tried Shiro and Keith cannot remember right now. We can extract memories from him and see if we can find the answers in them.”

“Now you want us to invade his memories!” Lance hissed.

“It’s the only way.”

“No it’s not and you know that Allura.” Shiro’s nostrils flared while Allura’s lips curled.

“He cannot be trusted right now –”

“You all trusted me!”

“But you’re not a *monster*!”

Silence.

Allura’s eyes widened a fraction of a second after she had said this, and she desperately wished that she could take it back. She hadn’t meant for it to come out like that, and by the horrified looks of her teammates, she knew it was the wrong thing to say.

Shiro looked as if he’d been *slapped*. He had stepped back, away from Allura, with eyes wide and full of so much hurt. Lance’s hands were over his mouth and unshed tears were making his eyes shine. Hunk’s gaze had dropped to the floor and there was a small quiver in his shoulders. Even Pidge couldn’t hide the hurt in their face and looked away when Allura looked at them.

“Shiro...I...” Allura swallowed thickly when Shiro took another step back, putting his hands in between them. She could feel her own heart cracking at the pain in her chest and the pain

in her friends. “I’m doing this for the safety of the team.”

With that, Allura had flipped on the switch of the machine, beginning to extract Keith’s memories before storming out of the room. A small bundle of colorful mice followed after her. After a second of looking between the paladins and the door where Allura had gone through. Then, with a sigh he followed after his princess, pausing for a moment at the door to speak.

“Keith was as much her family now, as yours.” Then he was gone.

After a few seconds, Hunk had pulled Lance into his arms and walked the two out of the room. Both were not up to watching Keith frozen in a pod, even in Galra form, and were most likely headed for their rooms of the kitchen.

Shiro swallowed, feeling hot tears burning in his eyes and he too was storming out of the room.

Only Pidge remained, wondering where it had all fallen apart.

x.x.V.x.x

Cold.

Cold.

Everything was so cold.

Normally it was always hot.

Too, too hot.

But now it was cold; so very cold.

Why?

Why can’t I move?

Where am I?

He couldn’t hear their heartbeats anymore.

Only his.

T-Thump. T-Thump. T-Thump.

It’s too slow now.

There were voices. He could barely hear them. Couldn’t recognize them.

What was happening?

There was no pain.

Not anymore.

He could not feel it. Nor could he see it. Everything was gone.

But so very cold.

"Patience yields focus. Remember that Keith."

Who are you?

Who is Keith?

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro was always at Keith's pod now. He was there when everyone had awoken and when everyone had gone to bed. It almost felt as if Shiro was living there.

Lance wasn't any better.

Or Hunk.

Or Pidge.

Even Allura. Though she tended to wait until everyone was gone. She and Shiro had still yet to talk to one another but they could be in the same room. They'd come to a silent understanding and apology where no words were needed to be said. Still, everyone was tense.

Shiro glanced over at the small glass container that contained the smoke, of which was supposed to be Keith's memories. Unlike Sendak, Keith's memories had come immediately, once the machine was turned on. Though, Shiro had not heard Keith's voice or any voice, no matter how many questions they asked. Keith remained silent and immobile.

"Keith? Are you there?" Shiro asked again. His eyes moved from Keith's memories to rest on the scars that lined Keith's neck. Even with the change in skin color, Shiro recognized the hand-shaped scarring on his neck from the encounter with the robots. Now, another scar would form on Keith's right hand and arm, and around his left torso. This caused Shiro to look down at his own arms and legs, feeling an itch crawl under his skin.

Quickly, before his mind could wander, he looked back at Keith.

"Keith?"

"Nothing yet?" Shiro barely noticed when Hunk stood beside him.

"No."

"Have you looked at his memories yet?" Hunk decided to ask, even if his chest felt too tight the entire time and his heart was beating like crazy. Shiro remained silent, leaving Hunk to sigh. "I get it. I don't want to either. I'm afraid of what I'll see."

"Of the things he's done?" Shiro whispered. Hunk shook his head, though Shiro missed this.

"No. Of the things they've done to him."

Shiro tried to swallow the lump in his throat.

"I never thought about all this. Any of this." Hunk admitted quietly. Shiro huffed a weak laugh but remained quiet otherwise. "I mean, even when we began to fight Voltron and fight against the Galra and monsters. I never really thought of this as a *war*. With prisoners and casualties. With one of our own being taken, mutilated and tortured. I just...I just never expected this to happen to one of us." Hunk's gaze roamed across Keith's pale form. "It's silly when I say it

out loud; to think like that in a time of war. But I never expected this.”

“You guys don’t belong in this war.” Shiro said. “You’re so *young*.”

“So are you Shiro. You never deserved to be caught up in this war. You never deserved to be taken or tortured for a year. I think you forget how *much* you’ve endured this past year.” Hunk reprimanded softly.

“I can never forget, Hunk. No matter how hard I try.” Shiro’s shoulders slumped.

“Exactly. You need to give yourself a break sometimes. Don’t carry the weight on your shoulders.” Hunk placed a hand on Shiro’s back. “We’re going to get Keith back. Whether he’s human or Galra, we will get him back. Don’t worry.” Shiro could feel a whole new rush of emotions overstimulating him at Hunk’s words.

Before he could express them, there was a sudden tap on the glass beside them. Hunk and Shiro both looked at the glass containing Keith’s memory. There was a particular bright, white area within the smoke that was pressed up against the glass and pushing at Hunk and Shiro. The two shared a concerned look before approaching the glass of memories. However, once Shiro placed a hand on the glass, there was a bright light.

Then nothing.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith’s hands were shaking, still coated in blood. He wasn’t even sure whose blood it was anymore, but his hands wouldn’t stop shaking. All around him, bodies were strewn. Some were slumped up against the wall, in familiar Galra soldier uniforms. Others had lab coats on, like a doctors and were lying on their backs with eyes wide open.

Keith could hear the sounds of whimpering coming from two Galran who were pressed up against a lock door, desperately trying to escape.

There was also the sound of Zarkon’s laughter.

Always in his ear.

But he couldn’t find Zarkon, no matter where he looked. No doubt the coward was hiding behind Keith, and if he were stronger, then he would have hunted him down.

“Stay away from us. You monster!” Keith choked back a sob upon hearing Shiro’s voice. He knew that Shiro was crouched along the far wall of the room, over the bodies of his remaining teammates. Dead and dying.

There were other Shiro’s in the room too. But they were all killed.

Killed by Keith himself.

Vile rose in Keith’s throat at the memory and he found himself hunched over and vomiting on the floor. He could hear the sound of Zarkon’s laughter stopping immediately.

“Pathetic.” This was all Zarkon said and Keith wanted to cry.

“You will never amount up to anything like that. Take him back to his room. Recharge the chair.” Keith felt his eyes widened and a scream tore through his lips. This caused the other

Galra to also scream in fear. But then, Keith felt arms grabbing his arms and leg. Keith thrashed violently, kicked and screamed but he felt more and more hands grabbing at him.

Then there was pain.

Blinding, white, hot pain.

x.x.V.x.x

It was still so cold.

But he could feel two other presences this time. Two other creatures with him.

There was a painful tug at his mind.

What was that?

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro nearly had a heart attack when he entered the room with the cryogenic pods that morning, to find the pod holding Keith *empty*. Though, Keith's memories were still there. Shiro involuntarily shuddered, remembering the *memory* that he and Hunk had last seen. Neither had yet to bring it up to each other or the rest of the team, and spend the rest of the day hiding in their rooms.

His heart raced when he ran out of the room. He barely made it to the training room, before running into Allura. Upon seeing his panicked look, she was quick to stop him and rest her hands on his shoulders. Shiro could barely make out his words as he was breathing too fast.

"Shiro, what's wrong? Are we under attack?"

"K-Keith! His pod, it's empty!"

Allura's eyes softened, which Shiro thought was probably not the best reaction to be having right now. Although, she could argue that his panicking was actually not the best either. Maybe they both needed to take a moment to calm down and refocus.

However, Allura had gently taken his hands and pulled him into a small room beside the training room. Shiro's heart was still racing and his confusion was only rising.

His eyes did widen when he saw what she was showing him.

Keith was alright.

In fact, he was awake. He was also stomping around and snarling, but he was alright.

Shiro could detect a particle barrier between Keith and Allura and him. The barrier went around in a hexagonal space, giving Keith enough room to walk around a good distance, but was locked in from all angles. There was a bed with a pile of blankets in the far corner of the room, along the wall furthest from Keith's stomping.

His ears rose upon hearing Allura and Shiro enter the room outside of him. Immediately, a growl ripped through his throat and he lunged at them. However, he was shoved back forcefully by the particle barrier and Keith rolled away.

"You were right about keeping him in the pod." Allura admitted quietly and let Shiro's

hand go. "He's not going to heal if we keep him asleep. Then Voltron will always be at its weakest. I figured we could try to just remap his memories and trigger ones with us. I know it might still feel like a prison, by this way we can interact with him better. The barrier won't shock or hurt him; it's just like a wall to keep us safe until he remembers us." Allura explained while Keith went back to pacing back and forth, all the while hissing.

"Allura..." Shiro was at a loss for words. But he silenced at the gentle smile sent his way.

"I want Keith to come back to us too. If this helps, then we might as well try it."

Shiro's smile was the first real smile that Allura had seen in months. "Thank you."

x.x.V.x.x

"Who the heck are you?" Keith frowned at the obnoxious question thrown his way. He'd already been asked about a hundred other times, since he entered the building. He thought about ignoring the person, for the sake of his own temper.

"Dude! Hey, short-stack, I'm talking to you!" Keith really wasn't planning on murdering anyone today, but plans do tend to change.

He grit his teeth and spun around to face a tall, lanky boy. The boy had dark, tanned skin with a flop of brown hair on his eyes. His eyes were narrowed suspiciously at Keith, and Keith was momentarily annoyed at the fact of yet another student being taller than him.

"Are you talking to me, dipshit?" Keith hissed, hands clenched into fists at his side. The boy's eyes widened in momentary surprise, and Keith relished in victory. It was short-lived when the boy snorted down at him. Who did this guy think he was?

"Do you speak to your mother with that type of language, dios mio, that's nasty." The boy frowned while shaking his head, as if disappointed in Keith. Keith cocked his head in confusion, unable to get the angle that this kid might be coming from. Instead, he squared his shoulders and puffed out his chest before squaring himself up to the boy's height. He ignored the fact that he had to stand on his toes to do so.

"I don't have a mother."

The boy blinked before stumbling away from him. "Shit – Sheesh, sorry dude. I didn't mean it like that."

"You wouldn't have said it if you didn't mean it." Keith growled and the boy's expression soon became one of anger once again.

"Dude, are you always this mean to everyone? Like, you got a stick up your ass?"

Keith's eye twitch. "I'll shove one right up your –"

"Let's move cadets! Get to class and stop lollygagging!"

Keith and the boy both jumped at the sound of their commander's shout. Neither wanted to experience the wrath of a commander during the first day of classes and elected to walk to class. To Keith's misfortune, the kid was going in the same direction as Keith.

"What's your name mullet-brain?" Keith could only roll his eyes, while the kid hung

around his neck.

“Keith.”

“Well, the names Lance. Better remember it, because I’m going to be the best fighter pilot that this school has ever seen.” The boy grinned brightly and stuck out his hand for Keith to shake. There was an awkward silence where Keith didn’t move. However, in the end, he grabbed Lance’s hand and shook hard.

“Congratulations.”

x.x.V.x.x

It wasn’t cold.

And it wasn’t hot.

But there were walls keeping him in.

Why did everyone want to keep him in?

Why did they always lock him in?

The creatures were back.

This time there were more.

Four heartbeats.

Sometimes five.

Or six.

Thump-thump. Thump-thump.

x.x.V.x.x

Lance could feel his fingers twitching and his skin crawling, but he remained standing in front of the barrier that separated him and Keith. At the moment, Keith was banging his fists against the barrier, in hopes of either reaching Lance or terrifying Lance. Lance wouldn’t admit that he was feeling the latter at the moment.

Though, he wasn’t terrified *of* Keith.

He was terrified *for* Keith.

For what Keith was becoming.

For days now, everyone had been trying their best to reach Keith and get him to recognize any of them. Time was running out and Lance knew it was only a matter of time before Zarkon found them again, found Keith.

“You really are a furball, aren’t you, buddy?” Lance shakily said, when Keith slammed his fist against the barrier in a particularly violent manner. Keith snarled down at him, but Lance remained firm and straightened his back.

“I mean look at you. We can’t even leave you alone for two seconds, before you get yourself kidnapped by Zarkon like a damsel in distress, and then mutated on.” Lance shook his head in mock annoyance, ignoring the confused growl that Keith sent them. “Seriously, we can’t take you anywhere and expect you to do anything according to plan, can we?”

Keith hissed in reply and his claws scratched at the barrier. Lance winced more so at the noise, than the motion.

“Only you, would get yourself kidnapped and then turned into a freakin’ Galra.” Lance snorted when Keith growled once more. However, his banging seemed to finally stop, after only two straight hours, and he instead chose to stare at Lance.

“Sheesh, you’d think that you’d learn to use that Quiznak of a brain for once.” Lance laughed bitterly, unable to feel any humor in this situation. The longer it took for Keith to come back at him, the more likely he *never* would.

However, when Lance looked up, he noticed a different expression on Keith’s face.

Keith’s ears were pressed down flat, and his yellow eyes were wide and for once, not filled with hatred or bloodthirst. His nose was no longer scrunched up and his body posture was tilted to the side, as if in confusion.

Lance nearly jumped.

“Keith?! Can you hear me buddy? Are you understanding me, mullet-head?”

Keith cocked his head to the other side and Lance whooped.

“Bird brain? Star boy? Short stack? Mullet face?” Keith continuously tilted his head back and forth with every nickname that Lance was shouting in that moment. Subconsciously, Lance knew he should *probably* be concerned that Keith was only responding to the names that Lance had called him over the years. But in that moment, Lance didn’t care.

Because guess what? Those names all *meant* something to Keith.

“Buddy? Pal? Amigo? Drop out?” Lance laughed and cheered when Keith continued to cock his head back and forth in confusion. It wasn’t much and didn’t necessarily mean that Keith *knew* who he was, but there was one thing that Lance knew for sure from all this.

Keith was remembering.

x.x.V.x.x

Who are you?

What are you saying to me?

You’re so loud.

x.x.V.x.x

“How the hell did you even make this?” One of Keith’s eyebrows rose, when then small, auburn haired kid came up to him. They rescued Shiro only hours earlier and Keith’s adrenaline was still running. He knew there was likely to be little or no sleep tonight, as he constantly checked on Shiro, who was still sedated. However, Keith’s new companions didn’t seem to have a problem,

crashing on his couch together.

The small kid immediately walked up to Keith's small hover ship that he had flown back from the Garrison. "This isn't Garrison tech. You made this!"

Keith blinked and panicked when he realized they were talking to them now. "Er, yeah?" Of course he made it. After getting kicked out of the Garrison he needed some sort of mode of transportation in order to get around this desert. Sure, maybe, just maybe, he had "borrowed" some parts from the Garrison, but it wasn't like he could find any out here.

"This is incredible. I've never seen anything like this. Even the Garrison only has rovers to travel in the desert." The kid adjusted their glasses while observing Keith's ship from all angles. "I'm assuming you used magnets for the beams?"

"Ah yeah." Keith nodded, impressed that the kid could easily identify all the working components to his ship. He was even more surprised when they began to list of all the inner workings and mechanics of his ships. Many that he actually couldn't even name himself, but knew how to put together.

"This is impressive for someone your age." The kid finally turned away from the ship in order to take a good look at Keith, who was frowning as usual. "You don't really smile a lot, huh?"

"I do. Just not when I'm surrounded by idiots." Keith shrugged. Rather than looking hurt or offended, the other kid simply laughed. This caused Keith to feel even more confused than usual. That wasn't a normal reaction.

"I like you. You're a bit of an ass yourself, but I like you." The kid grinned, proceeding to hold out their hand towards Keith for a shake. Although, Keith wasn't exactly the most social competent or best in these situations, he at least had enough manners to understand what the kid was trying to do.

"Pidge Gunderson. Nice to meet you Keith." Pidge said.

"Ah, you too?"

"Lance told us about you."

"Oh, that makes sense." Keith nodded. Pidge yawned widely, while taking one last look at the ship beside Keith. As they made their way out of the room, Keith smiled softly to himself, unseen by Pidge. He had a feeling that maybe this adventure wasn't as bad as he was expecting.

x.x.V.x.x

He didn't know what was happening anymore.

Time was slipping by and he couldn't keep up.

They still kept him in a cage.

These creatures.

Who were they?

A little one – probably a runt – was in front of him now.

Their heartbeat was faster than the others.

Thump-thump-thump-thump.

Who are you?

x.x.V.x.x

Pidge's throat felt tight as they entered the room (*a cell really*), that held Keith, with their father and brother. They'd originally been wary of letting their father and Matt near Keith, after having learned that Keith had nearly *killed* them in the arena.

At first they'd been furious.

Then they were sad.

Now they just felt guilty.

It wasn't Keith fault that he had attacked her family. That's what the Galra had *trained* him to do, in order to survive. That's all Keith knew anymore. He was nothing but a predator, trained to hunt and kill on Zarkon's order, and it made Pidge sick to think that they had blamed Keith for a second. Keith would *never* have hurt their family.

Never.

"Katie, I don't understand why you all insist on locking him up." Their father sighed wearily, when all of them stopped in front of the barrier holding Keith back. Keith hissed, recoiling from the pile of blankets on the floor, upon hearing the group enter. His eye zeroed in on Commander Holt and Matt, and he snarled, readying his claws at his side.

Matt flinched when Keith jumped at the barrier, only to be shoved back.

"It's obvious that there is nothing left of him." Commander Holt sighed. Pidge could feel a lump forming in their throat but they ignored it, in order to bring up Keith's genetic DNA. They took a seat with multiple screens surrounding them and soon Matt followed.

"Are these his scans?"

"Yeah. Allura thinks that Zarkon genetically altered his DNA structure to become almost entirely Galran." Pidge smiled at their brother. They'd spent nearly every waking moment with their brother and father and it still couldn't make up for that year missed.

"Zarkon wanted to create a weapon, to fight you, so he could obtain Voltron." Commander Holt replied eyes never leaving the pacing form of Keith.

"He's hurting our friend. We're not going to leave Keith to fight this battle alone." Pidge muttered, without looking up from their screens. Matt's glasses reflected off the light of the room, immediately catching Keith's eyes. The Galra's pacing began to slow but no one took notice.

"I know your friend is hurting. But do you really think this is fair? Making him suffer as such?" Commander Holt glanced down at both his kids. He knew that the boy didn't deserve this life, especially after learning how *young* he was (younger than Matt). His heart cracked every time he thought about how this could have been Katie. *His Katie.*

"It's not fair if we just give up. It's not fair for him." Pidge's eyes glared sharply at their

father when they finally looked up from their work. Beside them, Matt turned to look at Keith, who was...staring at him?

"Katie, it's not fair for him to live like this." Commander Holt said softly. "Look at him. Does that look like the Keith you knew? At all?" Pidge's heart was beating much too fast in their chest. Their eyes locked onto Keith's and for a split second, their body froze. They could still hear their dad talking and rambling, but they could barely actually hear the words.

Keith was kneeling on his knees, with his hands resting at his sides. No longer was he snarling. No longer was he growling or pacing. No longer was he trying to smash his entire body against the wall. His face wasn't in a never-ending expression of fury, but rather one of curiosity.

"Keith?" Pidge whispered.

It was then that they noticed Keith's eyes were locked onto Matt, who was trying not to look too uncomfortable. When Matt shifted, and his glasses slide down his nose, Keith inched forward. Pidge's heart was hammering by now.

"A-Ah, Pidge? What's he doing?" Matt asked quietly, barely moving his lips. However, Keith had heard and there was a frown on his lips.

"I'm not sure. I think he's watching you." Pidge rubbed their chin thoughtfully.

"Why?"

"I think...I think he recognizes you." Pidge didn't want to admit, but their heart sunk at the thought that Keith would remember their family, before them. It was quickly pushed aside when Keith inched closer. Matt held his breath, in attempts to keep from flinching back, he could feel his father trying to move in front of them. However, all that was forgotten when Pidge suddenly snatched the glasses off his face.

"Hey! Pidge, I can't see that great!"

"Shush, hold on a second!"

Pidge swatted at their brother, before putting the glasses over their face and standing in front of the barrier.

"Katie!"

"Pidge?"

Pidge's heart was hammering wildly in their chest, when Keith's kneeled form was almost right up to the barrier in front of them. Keith's eyes were staring up at Pidge's face, causing their ears and cheeks to burn but they remained in position, despite their father's reluctance to be there.

"Keith?"

Keith made no motion that he had heard or understood Pidge, but he wasn't looking away. Then, Pidge felt a small flutter in their heart as they took a seat beside Matt, in front of Keith. Keith was still in there and they were going to do everything in their power, to save their friend.

"Hey, Pidge," Matt asked slowly, as he noticed the smile on Pidge's face. "Have you

looked into Keith's chromosome to..."

x.x.V.x.x

Why do I want to protect this runt?

Why are you looking at me?

You're so warm.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith's head hurt.

Apparently, being in space didn't mean one could never get a migraine, because Keith's head was currently trying to implode. He'd finally managed to get away from Lance's constant arguing and yelling for five simple minutes of peace. However, it didn't last.

Keith wanted to cry at the sound of his door opening. But he didn't, because he didn't need everyone on the team seeing him cry. Over a stupid headache. Instead, he groaned into his pillows.

"Keith?" Keith was actually more than a bit surprised to hear Hunk's voice instead of Lance or even Shiro's. Keith wasn't prepared to put up with annoying Lance or overly concerned cautious at the moment, and he wasn't expecting to hear Hunk. Wearily, he lifted his face from his pillow to see Hunk standing in his doorway, twisting something in his hand.

"Huh?"

"I, um, heard you weren't feeling too great today." Hunk muttered quietly, closing the door behind him, which Keith was grateful for. The light from the hall was starting to bother him, even after only a few minutes. "I heard, you had a headache from Lance."

"Great." Keith grumbled into his pillow. He could already hear Lance making up stories in his teasing tones about Keith being brought down by a migraine. Maybe it would be best if he just flung himself into space now. It was sure to save him from dealing with Lance.

"I've brought some ice. For your headache." Hunk continued but he didn't move from his spot. Keith sighed into his pillow. "My mom, she used to have bad migraines, but this little trick with ice would help all the time. See' she's put it on the front of her neck and forehead and close her eyes. Then she'd stay like that –"

"What?" Keith looked up blearily from his bed when Hunk's ramblings finally ceased. The bigger of the two teens blushed heavily and slowly made his way to Keith.

"Lay on your back." Keith blinked in surprise, but the drumming in his head from the headache made things worse. Figuring he had nothing to lose, Keith complied. He hissed when the cold ice pack was pressed between his collarbone and his neck. "Close your eyes and lay here. Apparently there's an artery here that connects straight to your brain. It helped my mom's migraines a lot, so maybe it can help yours?" Keith was a little more than touched by Hunk's actions and he felt himself laugh softly.

"Thanks Hunk."

x.x.V.x.x

The next one that came was bigger.

Much bigger.

Not as tall as him, but wider.

Muscular.

His heart was hammering even faster than even the runt.

He must be a warrior.

Then why was he so scared?

x.x.V.x.x

Hunk didn't know why he was coming in alone. He'd never been in to see Keith alone, since Keith had awoke from the cryogenic pod. But after hearing Pidge's excitement and Lance's screeches, he felt guilty not trying to help their friend get better. Who knew? Maybe Keith really was getting better and would be in a terrific mood today with him.

He could only hope.

However, it seemed that Keith was more agitated than usual today. Upon seeing Hunk enter the room, Keith immediately flung himself at the barrier with a loud growl. His claws scrapped violently at the barrier, causing Hunk to wince and nearly drop what he was holding in his hands. *Maybe this wasn't such a good idea.*

Hunk chastised himself for the thought of giving up, like a *coward*, before he even tried to save his friend. Hunk knew that while Keith wasn't too emotional or friendly, he would *die* trying to save and protect his friends. He owed Keith this much in return.

"H-Hi, Keith. Y-You look pretty mad." Hunk chuckled nervously, while Keith continued to angrily claw at the barrier. His heart was hammer far too fast in his chest, and his throat felt too tight, that honestly Hunk felt like he was dying on the inside. He briefly wondered if this really was what it felt like to die.

"So, I um, I brought you something, to try and help." Hunk continued, wincing every time that Keith clawed against the barrier. Hunk's hands were shaking and he was more than just a little afraid of dropping what he had in his hands.

Before he could lose his cool, Hunk had marched himself right up to the barrier and put the container in his hands, in front of him. Hunk opened the lid quickly and squeezed his eyes shut when Keith snarled at him.

Silence.

Heart still beating rapidly, Hunk cracked one eye opened when he no longer heard the sound of Keith scratching at the barrier. There wasn't even the sound of his grunts or growls. Instead there was silence. Slowly, Hunk opened both his eyes to see Keith *sniffing the air?*

Keith's nose wiggled and his head was tilted upwards, while he continuously sniffed the air and Hunk's heart sped up.

“Ah, I see you smell the casserole?” Hunk clucked nervously when Keith continued to sniff, placing both hands on the barrier. “You remember when we made this casserole? I taught you this after we learned baking? For space goo, it’s actually pretty good, and I figured you gotta be hungry by now.”

Keith’s eyes turned down to Hunk, causing Hunk to nearly faint on the spot, before glancing down at the container in Hunk’s hand. He sniffed again.

“It probably smells awesome for you.” Hunk admitted. “I mean, it smells great to me, but with your heightened sense of smell, I bet it’s great. Unless Galra hate space food? I sure hope not. Food is delicious and a gift that should be treasured.” Hunk rubbed his chin as his thoughts rambled out loud. Keith licked his lips.

“I think you remember, huh?” Hunk felt a genuine smile grace his lips. “If you were so bloodthirsty, I doubt this would make you hungry. This tastes a lot better than human – I think?” Hunk replied, moving over to the opening hole in Keith’s barrier. The only small opening available.

“Food is meant to be shared.” Hunk smiled when Keith followed him closely. “You should enjoy this with me, alright?”

x.x.V.x.x

What have you given me?

It’s so good.

You’re weak.

x.x.V.x.x

“My name is Takashi Shirogane and I’m your new brother!” Keith blinked owlishly at the boy that had suddenly entered his bedroom.

This was Keith’s tenth foster home and he was only six. He couldn’t even understand why he kept moving around so much, or why everyone kept bringing him back. But he knew it made his heart hurt. All he wanted was somewhere to stay and call home.

Keith had learned all about his family like a good boy.

He had a foster mother, father and apparently a brother who was eight-years-old if Keith remembered correctly.

Keith simply stared at Takashi from his spot, on his large new bed, while Takashi continued to beam at him. Without waiting for an answer, Takashi crawled onto the bed beside Keith, without any struggle, and turning to smile at his new brother. He shoved a small, fluffy toy into Keith’s hands, surprising the little boy.

“That’s for you. His name’s Watari. He was my stuffed puppy and he always helped me to sleep better at night, but since this home is new to you, Watari can protect you!” Takashi grinned. Keith took a moment to look at the little toy in his hand, noticing how worn that the stuffed Dalmatian was, from obvious years of love and care. His eyes began to water at the gesture before burying his face into the dog’s fur. Takashi jumped in guilty shock.

“Oh, no! I’m sorry if he’s ugly, you don’t have to have him if he makes you cry!”

Takashi panicked.

“N-No. T-Thank you.” Keith shook his head firmly, and tightened his little grip on Watari. His lower lip still trembled and a few more tears leaked from his eyes, but he managed to look at Takashi with a watery smile. Takashi breathed a sigh of relief, scooting over to be closer to the boy. Then he gently wiped his thumb under his eye.

“Then, there’s no need to cry silly!” Takashi giggled, causing Keith to snifle. “Watari is yours now, forever! And I’ll protect you too, since you’re my new little brother!” Takashi threw his arms around Keith in a hug, causing the two boys to stumble back, locked in embrace. Keith laughed loudly alongside Takashi, already forgetting his previous tears.

“Me too! I’ll always protect you too Taki!”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith and Shiro were staring at each other, after a long day.

Shiro had been in to visit Keith several times since Keith was put into this protective barrier. Though, he usually went with Lance, Pidge, Allura or a group of others. Every time Keith would react differently. Sometimes he wouldn’t stop pacing the expanse of his barriers. Other times he clawed at the barrier and viciously fought to reach them. Sometimes, he sat in a corner, far away from anyone, unmoving when they tried to talk to him. Other times he was slamming his entire body against the barrier in attempts to break free.

However, today Keith was tiredly leaning against the barrier where Shiro was standing. Shiro knew that Keith must be exhausted. After everything the Galra had done and the torture that Keith had been submitted to must be catching up to him. Along with poor nutrition and diet and being locked up once again, was taking a toll on his friend’s body.

Shiro swallowed thickly, sliding down to kneel beside Keith.

Keith didn’t even look up in his direction.

“Hey, buddy.” Shiro whispered once he was seated on the floor. “I bet you’re tired. After everything you’ve been through? You deserve to sleep for *centuries*. I’m sorry you’re stuck in this box. I know you probably don’t feel any different from when you were with the Galra – being locked up, but I promise this is temporary.” Keith still made no move to look up and Shiro’s heart cracked.

“I’m sorry this happened to you Keith. God, I’m so sorry you have to go through this every day.” Shiro croaked, as he leaned his head against the barrier. His eyes trailed up to the ceiling while his thoughts darkened. “I never meant for you to get hurt, or for them to take you from us. God, I’m sorry. Neither of us were expecting this when I let for Kerberos, huh?”

Shiro felt a weak smile come to him at the memory. “Do you remember the ships we use to steal back at the Garrison? They were just small cargo ships, but we managed to sneak out every week and take them for a spin? You’re professors were so impressed when you were suddenly scoring near perfect marks on all your simulations. They were convinced, one day, you would beat *my* scores.” Shiro chuckled with a shake of his head.

It was true. Even after graduation, Shiro constantly heard about the newbie’s scores threatening his own at the top of the class. Rather than feeling threatened, Shiro had never felt more proud of his friend who had come from a broken home and life. Keith was finally making

himself known.

“But you never could keep your temper in check.” Shiro sighed. “I’m positive several of your professors scored you lower than they should have, because of your temper and attitude. Even when you deserved those perfect marks. But you were a shitty team player.” Shiro’s smile returned and he could feel Keith’s breaths on the barrier. “Everyone expected you to become a solo pilot, and never make it as a fighter pilot, but I guess they were all wrong huh? Turns out, you’re one of the best team members for the Galaxy’s greatest team ever. Too bad you can’t rub that in our professor’s face.” Shiro chuckled and let a small silence fall over them.

“Even if no one else is, your team is proud of you Keith. All of us. Especially me.” Shiro swallowed thickly, feeling his eyes burn. Quickly, he looked away from the ceiling and brought his attention back to Keith, and jumped.

Keith was pressed up against the barrier with wide eyes, staring right at Shiro.

x.x.V.x.x

Who are you?

Your voice is so calm.

Then, I heard the sound of a roar.

Red.

x.x.V.x.x

Can’t you help me figure out if you are real, or fake?

Chapter End Notes

Ah, will he remember? I guess we’ll have to wait and see. My poor, fluffy son. Actually, all of my poor children need a break. I got this chapter up somewhat fast, but I am finishing up my last day of classes this weekend and then I’m going on a mini break/vacation at the end of the week, because I actually haven’t had a break since like January and I’m tired! I’m hoping to post chapter 7 before I leave, but chapter 8 may take a little longer!

Thank you all so much for your comments, kudos, support and love. I really do appreciate every one of them and you guys are seriously the best fandom and audience. I honestly can’t believe the support that this story has gotten, so thank you from the bottom of my heart. I’m sure Keith would thank you too, if his mind wasn’t cracked at the moment. You guys are so funny in the comments, but I apparently need to put in a warning that this fic may cause some emotional and mental unbalances to your health. But hey, that’s what you sign up for when you climb aboard the Voltron Keith Angst Train!

Thanks and peaceout!

They Send Me Away to Find A Fortune

Chapter Notes

Hey guys, so this chapter is a bit overdue. Sorry about that, I didn't mean for it to take so long. But I was super busy, then I was supposed to go on a mini vacation this weekened but that actually got cut short, and I didn't get one and I was so busy. And right now I am super tired but I really wanted to get this chapter out to you all for being so nice and waiting so patiently for me. I'm actually a bit excited for this chapter, even if I struggled the most with this chapter. But now we get to see the actual confrontation with Keith and his team. Will he remember? Will anyone get hurt? Will there be angst (Pshhh, this is me, you should know the answer to that question by chapter 7)? Why am I asking so many questions? It's probably because of how tired I am. Yeah...

Anyhow, you guys are so sweet and I absolutely love interacting with all of you in the comments and you seriously make my day! Thank you so much for the love and support of this fic and always being so kind! Every comment, kudo, bookmark and love makes me want to write this fic forever! Thank you so much and you guys rock! If you ever wanna talk about Voltron you can find me @lordofthebigtimesupernatural on tumblr. You can even send writing prompts or ideas to me, because I love to write! Thanks and enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When you look at me, what do you see?

When I look at you, I don't know what I see.

x.x.V.x.x

The wormhole had been unexpected.

No one figured that was how Allura's rescue mission was going to end. With a corrupted wormhole that sent all of the Paladins into separate dimensions and planets. Keith could do little more than keep from panicking as an out of control, Red flew towards an unknown planet. The controls were still malfunctioning and Red was unresponsive.

Keith was flying into darkness, unable to navigate, let alone try to call for help.

His last thoughts before falling into darkness, unknowing of his fate was a prayer for his teammates.

Please let them be safe.

x.x.V.x.x

Red?

Keith felt tired. Much too tired than he should be.

His mind felt as if he were in a fog and his thoughts were a jumbled mess, as if a puzzle

had been scattered through his brain. His body reactions, his thoughts; everything felt too slow and as if it had taken more energy than necessary.

His memories were all over the place too.

There were bits and pieces that he could pull of the most recent parts of his life, but there were like fragments and flashes rather than whole bits of memory. He could remember the experience with the corrupted wormhole, being rescued and planning to attack Zarkon's ship. He remembered being ejected into space and taken in by Zarkon, but that's where his memories stopped. He couldn't seem to pick up anything after that except little bits and pieces.

A heavy feeling was settled deep in his bones and his entire body *ached*. There were hot bursts of pain all over but overall he simply felt tired. More like exhausted.

His vision was dark and blurred and he could barely make out the shapes in front of him, and his hearing sounded like he was deep underwater. Voices and sounds were muffled and barely audible at the moment, causing him to wince.

"Keith?"

Shiro's voice felt like a breakthrough in the fog that was his mind and suddenly he could feel his body freeze up. *Shiro! How could he have forgotten about Shiro? About Lance and Hunk? And Pidge? Were they alright?* Keith's heartbeat was beating rapidly while his vision began to slowly clear and he could make out a sole figure standing in front of him.

As his vision cleared, Keith realized that there was more than one figure in front of him, all kneeling down to his level (*when had he gotten on the floor?*).

The first thing that Keith noticed when his vision had cleared was how *clear* his vision was. It was as if someone had put a powerful lens over Keith's eyes. He could see every detail and tiny speck everywhere he looked. From the raised, bumpy skin on across the bridge of Shiro's face, to the dusting of freckles all over Pidge's face. He could see the small crowfeet wrinkles in the corners of Lance's eyes, from constantly smiling, and the lighter skin on Hunk's hand from where a blaster must have hit him. He could see the *hundreds* of colors swirling in Allura's eyes and each little piece of fur on the mice sitting on her shoulder.

That's when Keith noticed their concerned looks on everyone.

What had happened?

"Guys? What's happening?" Keith's voice was hoarse from disuse and almost sounded foreign in his ears. But at the moment he was too tired to notice or question it. Shiro's mouth morphed into a frustrated frown while Pidge scowled. Worry spiked through Keith's body. He attempted to sit up with the help of someone (*Hunk*) holding him upright.

"Guys? Where are we? What happened to me?" Keith tried asking again, only to have Allura and Lance repeat Shiro's reaction and Keith blinked. Keith noticed that Keith's voice had a weird tone to it, almost as if he were mumbling. He could clearly understand what he was saying but he figured the fatigue was making him feel like his words weren't English.

"Is he okay? He's not attacking us." Lance asked, looking away from Keith to ask Allura. Keith frowned.

"No. But it seems he's not speaking English." Allura replied and Keith blinked. He was

speaking English; he'd been the whole time. Keith knew he was tired but that shouldn't make his words completely unrecognizable.

"He never spoke before. But he never even talked." Shiro said, raising a concerned hand towards Keith. Keith was humiliated to admit that he felt himself flinch away, causing Shiro to immediately draw his hand back. Keith barely missed the look of dejection of Shiro's face. "I don't understand what he's saying."

"It must be some sort of Galran language." Pidge replied and Keith's worry only spiked further. *Galran? What did they mean Galran? He was speaking English.* Keith's body began to tremble in Hunk's arms as he struggled to stand up, ignoring the worried protests from the rest of his teammates.

"Keith, buddy, hey it's okay. Stay down."

"Yeah, listen to Shiro, bird-brain."

"Keith?"

Keith's throat tightened while his eyes burned. He found himself slowly crawling to his feet, swaying a couple times and nearly falling over if it hadn't been for Shiro and Hunk. His head thrummed with pain as *every* little noise assaulted his ears and the lights stung far too brightly for his eyes.

"What are you talking about? What do you mean, speaking Galran? Why can't you understand me?" Keith could feel his worry and panic beginning to boil inside him the more and more he became aware and conscious. The others stepped *away* from him once he raised himself to his feet, and Keith realized he was staring *down* at them. Which shouldn't be possible. He was shorter than Shiro, Hunk and Lance (though Keith was loathed to admit that). He could never look down on them unless they were kneeling and he wasn't.

"Keith, hey calm down." Shiro held out both hands in front of him in attempts to make a calming gesture towards Keith. Keith's heart was beating much too fast to be considered healthy and he was sure he would be more worried about that, if he wasn't panicking about the fact that *no one could understand him*.

"Why can't you understand me?! What's happened to me?! What happened to Zargon?" Keith's trembling was increasing while the others took another step away from him. He couldn't understand why they weren't listening to him. There was a slight tingling beginning to run throughout his body. He noticed everyone flinching at his words for another second. As Keith attempted to step *towards* the others, he raised out a hand.

Then his body turned to ice.

Keith's eyes were immediately drawn to his outstretched hand and he stumbled back.

Where his hand was supposed to be, was a scarred, *purple* hand with sharp claws.

Instantly, Keith jerked back and shoved his other hand up to his face, only to get the same result. Keith's heart beat was through the roof. His hands shook violently as he observed them – observed those *long*, sharpened claws that trailed all the way up to purpled arms and shoulders. Keith felt his face twist into a look of horror, while his hands gripped the sides of his face. He was horrified to feel bits of hair and fur trailing down the sides of his face, only to stop at two small piles of fluff on his head. Tugging, Keith winced and realized that they were *attached* to him.

“W-What’s going on?” Keith noticed that everyone had already taken a defensive position, and his body tensed. They were defensive against him. *Why would they defend themselves against him? He could never hurt them.*

It was the reflection in the glass that caught Keith’s full attention.

In the reflection was a gruesome image of a Galra staring back at him.

Keith’s heart sunk.

The Galra was him.

Keith felt a scream tear through his throat, but all that came out was a terrifying roar and soon he was falling back into the darkness of his mind.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro cursed their luck, when Keith’s panic flared wildly. He thought for a split second that *their* Keith had finally returned and everything’s was going to be alright. After the frightening roar that had come from Red in the Hanger, Keith had passed out in his cell, twitching all over. Shiro alerted the others, demanding that Allura open up the cell in order to help Keith.

It had taken some for the twitching and spasms to stop, before Keith was slumped unconscious in Shiro’s arms. Everyone held their breath in terror, that something had terribly gone wrong.

Then Keith began to stir.

This time he wasn’t as agitated as he usually was and was rousing much more sluggishly than usual. As if, coming out from under some influence. When his eyes opened, Shiro was the first to notice that the yellow was beginning to recede and soon the familiar *purple* irises that everyone was used to was coming back to them. However, the rest of Keith’s body remained the same.

Then Keith started to speak a language no one could understand. Afterwards, no one stopped him from seeing his reflection in the glass. Shiro would never forget the look of pure terror on Keith’s eyes when he rubbed his face and stared into his own reflection. It was a look that Shiro knew all too well.

The look of seeing a monster.

After Keith had clutched his head and let out a roar, he turned to look back at the others and Shiro’s heart raced. His eyes were yellow again.

The familiar snarl was curling Keith’s lips back to reveal his pointed canines. His body slowly crouched in a position, ready to pounce at his prey. Shiro could feel the rest of his team beginning to regret their decision to let Keith *out*.

“Keith.” Shiro tried only to have Keith’s eyes narrow on him. Shiro had less than two seconds before Keith was lunging at him. Quickly, everyone moved to disperse and Shiro fell over as he shot away from Keith. Keith passed Shiro, landing on all fours on the ground behind where Shiro was. However, rather than turn for another attack, Keith had pushed himself into the hallway before racing down the hall.

Away from everyone else.

“What’s he doing?” Lance practically shrieked, gripping the ends of his hair in a death grip. Even Shiro blinked in confusion while Allura helped him to his feet. Hunk and Pidge shared a frightened look with one another, before peeking into the hallway just in time to see Keith disappear behind a corner.

“He wasn’t going to attack us. He was running.” Coran whispered, eyes widening in shock. Allura swallowed, realization slowly hitting her.

“He’s running away from us. Keith is *scared*.”

There was an uncomfortable silence that followed.

“We need to go after him.” Shiro said instantly and the others nodded hesitantly. “There are still prisoners aboard. We can’t let him find them. We don’t know how he’ll react.” Shiro was already sprinting out the door, without waiting for a response but he could hear several sets of footsteps running right behind him. *Hold on Keith, we’ll help you.*

“Dad! Matt!” Pidge gasped before breaking into neck breaking speeds. Shiro swallowed thickly, easily keeping up with their youngest team members as they raced to the common room where the prisoners were being held. Including their brother and father.

Shiro was torn between his concern for the prisoners and his concern for Keith.

Please, Keith is still there. There’s still Keith somewhere in there. Let us save him in time, please.

Matt and Commander Holt were both resting in the beds of the common room, unable to truly relax after being held prisoners for over a year. Matt was sure that he would never be able to relax after this, even if Zarkon was somehow defeated.

His thoughts wandered back to his younger sister – or was it his younger sibling? Katie was instant on being called Pidge since Matt and their father returned. It was something that their father did not seem to grasp, but Matt was slowly coming to terms with what this could mean for Pidge. He would be sure to ask them more about it when they returned.

Matt had only visited Keith once with Pidge and he was ashamed to admit it was one too many times for him. Unlike Pidge, who could see past Keith’s appearance and see past the snarling, terrifying monster that he had become, Matt was still uncomfortable around the Galra. Even if he was Pidge’s teammate, Matt still couldn’t stop the memories from his short fight in the arena with Keith. The Galra had been vicious and out for blood, ready to tear Matt, Commander Holt and anyone in his way to shreds. He was built to be a weapon for Zarkon, possibly even greater than Shiro.

Pidge had spent as much time as they could with Matt and Commander Holt, filling them in on everything that they had missed in the past year. Matt was secretly proud of them for breaking into the Garrison records to search more about him (he didn’t mention that he was saddened to hear how quick they were to give up looking for them). Their father was slightly more horrified, and yet proud, to hear that Pidge had snuck back into the Garrison as a boy and remained there until Shiro’s crash landing.

Despite being back for a few days now, Matt actually hadn’t spoken much to Shiro. In fact, they’d hardly even greeted one another since their return. Shiro had been with Keith upon arriving on the ship while Allura tended to them and the prisoners, and had been by Keith’s side almost every day. Though, the rest of the time fared the same boat. Keith sure was lucky to have a

team that cared about him this much.

It was a shame he couldn't remember it.

As Matt started to get up, determined to find Shio he heard a loud noise coming from just outside the hallway. Several prisoners were startled by the loud crashes, keeping the children close to them. Commander Holt and Matt were on their feet in seconds when a familiar growling was heard.

Matt felt his fear rise.

He watched as Keith burst into the common room, claws scratching against the metal walls, leaving behind long and disturbing marks. Matt's heart leapt into his throat while his fists tightened when Keith paused on all fours on the ground. The Galra panted harshly until he finally noticed that he wasn't alone.

Matt felt shivers run down his spine when yellow eyes locked onto his.

The growling picked up and Keith hissed at Matt, who was suddenly blocked by his father. Matt peeked over his father's shoulder just in time to see Pidge bursting into the room with Shiro close behind, both were out of their armor and sporting their basic clothes. Soon, Allura and the others followed in and were already maneuvering in a circle around Keith.

Instantly, Keith forgot about Matt to focus his attention on the group of people that were circling around him. He crouched low turning in multiple directions but no matter where he turned, there was someone blocking his path. The hairs on his neck and head stood up and Matt saw Keith's back arch. His claws dug deep into the ground and Matt winced at the sound.

"Pidge?" Matt hissed as his sibling became the closest member of the Voltron team to him.

"Hush. Don't startle him." Pidge whispered back, eyes never leaving Keith's defensive form. Keith hissed when Shiro tried to step too close to him and back further towards the wall.

"What is going on?" Commander Holt asked, eyeing the nervous group of prisoners who were simultaneously watching Keith, while trying to back away. None of which were being even remotely quiet in doing so, and had Keith's ears constantly twitching.

"He's more afraid right now than angry." Pidge explained while they attempted to push their family back away from Keith. Shiro was quick to move in position and make up for Pidge's loss. "Help me keep the prisoners from startling him. If he's startled, we don't know what he'll do."

"Why is he even out of a cell?" Matt whispered harshly, though he was already trying to push back the other prisoners and put some distance between them and Keith. Between himself and Keith.

"We thought he was back."

"You mean he changed back to normal?" Matt's eyes widened.

"Not exactly." Pidge pursed their lips, ignoring the scoff from their father. "He recognized us, and he was confused. Like he couldn't remember what happened. Then he started speaking to us –"

“Keith actually spoke?” Matt asked.

Pidge sighed. Keith snapped at Lance who had accidentally stepped too close to him from behind. “Well, that’s the problem. He was speaking to us, but it was Galran. No one could understand him and before Allura could try, Keith started to panic. I think, he understood that something was wrong. He’s was okay, until he saw his reflection in the glass. Then he snapped.”

Until he saw what he had become.

Matt grimaced, looking at the Galra in front of them. He might be afraid of Keith at the moment, but even he couldn’t imagine what it must have felt like to be the very being of your nightmares. He couldn’t imagine the turmoil Keith must have suffered if he actually was coherent.

“But he’s not attacking anyone?” Commander Holt commented, instinctively putting a hand over his children, when Keith slashed in their direction due to Shiro moving in.

“No, see that’s what’s different. He’s *scared* now. Not barbaric, like if Zarkon had trained him in that manner. I think he recognizes us but he can’t figure out why. He’s *fighting* the control over his mind.” Matt could hear that with every word that Pidge spoke, their hopes were increasing and their expression was beginning to fill with joy.

“So he’s scared? Like a caged animal?” Commander Holt, hushed a group of prisoners, while helping Pidge to push them out of the common room and away from the others. Thankfully, luck was on their side and the prisoners were listening much better than during their escape.

“Yeah. We just need to show him that everything’s okay and we’re not here to hurt him. Maybe then he’ll remember.” Pidge sighed.

“Pidge...”

However, before Matt could speak, there was a loud roar coming from Keith, and if Matt were being honest with himself, he would admit that the roar actually sounded like a noise of distress and fear. In the next instant, Keith had flung himself over Lance and Hunk, knocking the two to the ground before booking it out of the room. Stunned and disoriented, Shiro and the others scrambled after Keith, at a much slower pace before exiting the room.

Matt swallowed, fearing for what was to come.

x.x.V.x.x

They were following him. Those creatures. Those creatures that seemed *so very familiar*.

That’s because you know them! Don’t hurt them; stop running away from them.

He nearly whimpered at the sound of the voice in his head, so familiar and yet so foreign. However, he focused his energy and time in bolting away from the creatures that were set on following him. He was more than confused and frightened that none of these creatures had attacked him or tried to kill him. That wasn’t usually how it worked.

He was even more surprised and confused that *he* wouldn’t attack them.

That *really* wasn’t how it worked.

They’re your family. You cannot kill them. Stop running away.

He snarled at the voice, clamping his hands over his fluffy ears. His nails dug painfully into them, while he blindly ran into another room. The walls and hallways were unfamiliar to him and it felt that no matter where he ran there never would be a way out.

His ears twitched at the sound of footsteps running behind him.

Five people now. One is no longer following.

His heartbeat sped up.

Don't be afraid of them. Stop running away!

He was startled when one of them caught up and immediately he picked up his pace. He couldn't be captured – no he *wouldn't* be captured by these creatures. He would not become prisoner again.

Stop running away from them!

He leapt forward in attempts to get away from the creatures behind him, only to be stopped by a red, metallic head and a pair of bright, yellow eyes in front of him. He staggered and stumbled at sight of the yellow eyes, immediately falling backwards.

Do not be afraid. I am here to help.

He howled.

x.x.V.x.x

Shiro was frozen in place, with the others, unable to move in fear that something would go wrong, at the sight of the Red Lion crouched in front of Keith. Keith was lying on his back side, staring fearfully up at the Red Lion, mouth agape in a scream. The Red Lion was crouched on its front paws, with its hind raised in the air.

“What is happening?” Lance whispered, so softly that Shiro nearly missed it. He swallowed, afraid that if he so much as moved it would break the connection with Keith and Red. The others were just as frightened to move or make even the slightest bit of noise.

“I don't know.” Shiro admitted, eyes never once leaving Keith's trembling form. Though he was snarling at Red, his attempts to be tough were weak and he sounded more like a drowned kitten rather than a Galra fighter or warrior of Voltron.

Red pressed its face closer to Keith, who hissed at the robotic lion, swatting its clawed hands in the direction of the lion. Shiro held his breath in anticipation, though he didn't really know what to expect from this outcome. No one had thought about or really expected Red to intervene at all, especially after Red had encased itself in a force field upon Keith's disappearance.

However, he honestly wasn't expecting it when Red suddenly, opened its mouth wide to let out an earthshaking roar, causing Keith to stumbled flat on his back. Then Red had scooped Keith into its mouth, all the while Keith howled before sitting upright. To Shiro's horror, the partial barrier began to form around Red as the lion's eyes dimmed.

“Keith!” He couldn't help but shout and already Hunk, Lance and he were racing towards the now motionless lion. They shoved their bodies against the barrier, slamming their fists and hands against the barrier, but were unable to get past it and into Red.

“Keith! Keith!” Lance shouted over and over, relentlessly beating against the barrier. Shiro’s own body was trembling and his hands were curled into defeated fists against the barrier. Despite the fear, etched deep into his heart, he knew that no amount of smashing, bashing or fists would help Keith.

Only Red could.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith’s mind felt like his and yet it didn’t. It felt as if it belonged to someone else, with memories that he was unable to access. Memories that he knew were there, but were blank holes in Keith’s mind. His brain felt like a fog washed over it and his head throbbed painfully, as if he had been crushed under a thousand pounds of rocks.

His entire body ached, especially his ears and his hands.

The floor underneath Keith’s body was hard and cold, sending chills up Keith’s spine. His eyelids felt like sandpaper against his eyes, and it took more of a struggle to open them than he had hopped. *Maybe I could sleep forever?*

However, the previous events were slowly dancing across Keith’s closed eyelids and everything was coming back to him. Much too quickly.

You’re a monster.

Keith’s eyes snapped open in less than a second and he was shooting to his feet. The memory of bright yellow eyes and purple hair was flashing through his mind like neon lights. It was a memory that was sure to haunt him for the rest of his life. A memory that he desperately hoped to be a nightmare.

Spinning around, to gather his surroundings and bearings, Keith noticed that he was alone and that he was *inside* Red. *How on Earth had he gotten here?* He felt his pulse quickening and his eyes widening as he observed the inside of Red. There were bits and pieces of his memories, showcasing his fear. He was running away from something, or someone. *But who?*

Keith’s throat was tightening and the need for oxygen was becoming more and more apparent as he tried to assess the situation and figure out where he was or what had even happened to him. Though, his memories of those yellow eyes and claws were making his hands shake and his body tremble. He scanned through Red’s interior until coming across the long glass screen in front of him. Quickly, he put himself in front of the glass, desperately praying that everything had been nothing more than a nightmare.

However, to his horror, the nightmare was becoming his reality.

He let out a terrified shriek upon seeing the Galra version of his face, fearing what was in front of him. The familiar features on his face, told the story that this was him, but his features were twisted and scarred into the hideous form that was a Galra.

“No! No! How can this be happening?!” Keith roared, and unknowingly his temper flared and his body burned with fury. Keith gripped his hair tightly, nails digging into his scalp, while his body hunched over as if in physical pain.

You’re a monster.

They turned you into a monster.

“No! No! This is happening! This isn’t me!” Keith roared, practically pulling strands of hair out of his head. *Purple hair.* As he was more coherent now than before, Keith recognized that the words he was speaking wasn’t in fact English, but it was a language he had never heard before (*but he had; oh yes, he had for months on end*).

“What happened?!” Keith snarled, unable to bear the silence that was from Red. He couldn’t come to understand why Red was ignoring him in such a time of need, when he had awoken inside of the lion. His memories were still jumbled, with huge blocks missing, and the memories of his team – of Shiro, Lance, Pidge, Hunk, Allura and Coran – felt like distant stories instead of memories. They felt *real*. He could remember them but at the same time they felt false, as if something in his brain were trying to make them disappear.

It was terrifying Keith.

Keith roared once more, balling a clawed fist up before trying to smash it into the control panel. He was however, blocked by a particle barrier before thrown harshly away from the control panel. Keith yelped in pain, landing on his back and curling into a ball.

The deafening sound of Red’s roar filled his ears, until he couldn’t hear anything else. The sound echoed across his skull, practically vibrating within him. Keith whined pathetically when Red didn’t appear to stop.

“Red. Red. Red. Stop! Stop Red!” Keith moaned as the sound dug into his skull. However, Red didn’t stop and the pressure in Keith’s head only continued. He felt himself writhe ring in pain on the floor, unable to stop the noise, let alone move. More than ever he wished for Shiro or Allura or anyone to save him. To make the pain stop.

“Red. Red. Red No, please stop. Red. Red. Red. Stop!” Keith pleaded when the pressure in his head caused him to squeeze his eyes shut. It was becoming too much; too unbearable and he didn’t know how much longer he could remain like this. *Why was Red doing this?*

“I’m sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Red. Stop. Sorry, please stop. Please.” Keith whimpered and soon Red’s roars became snarls. He could feel a prickling feeling the back of his neck, running through to his hands and toes. Memories of Shiro, of Lance, of Hunk and Pidge, of Voltron, came flooding through his mind. Each memory thickened the level of pain in Keith’s head.

“Shiro. Lance. Pidge. Hunk. Shiro. Allura. Shiro. Please stop. Stop. Stop. Stop!” Keith said, in a desperate plea to get the pain to stop. Just as a blinding white light filled his vision, Red stopped completely and had lowered itself to the ground. It was then that Keith could see, through blurred vision, that Red had opened its mouth to the outside and there were figures running towards him.

His team.

His family.

His home.

As two figures knelt by his side, Keith desperately tried to remain awake but it was a battle that he was slowly losing.

“Shiro...”

No one knew how to act. No one knew what to say. Though, Lance could probably have something to say about how many times Keith has passed out on them today, but he felt that may in fact be a bit inappropriate at the time. Maybe, he could talk to Keith about shaving off all that hair.

Lance decided it was probably best for *everyone* if he kept quiet for now. He wasn't too sure how Shiro or the others might react to his commentary, let alone how Keith might react. The kid was normally a ticking time bomb, but now he was a kid on angry steroids.

"Keith?" He asked once again, trying to get the other to come out of the corner he had stuffed himself into. The others were waiting around Keith, out of uniform as to appear less intimidating to their friend after he had woken up once again.

After Red had finally opened back up to allow the Voltron team to enter, Keith was once again unconscious and they were starting back at square one. Lance was honestly starting to get a bit tired of it all. He just wanted *his* Keith back; he wanted everything to go back to normal. He wanted everyone to be safe; to be together.

As the days past, that notion seemed less and less likely.

However, Keith had woken up just over an hour ago and this time it was better than the others. Sure, he had panicked and tried to leap off the bed, but once he was blocked by Shiro and Hunk, Keith had shoved himself into the furthest corner of the room, away from everyone else and didn't try to run anymore. Sure, he was more or less hiding himself away without speaking, but this was progress. *Right?*

"Keith, hey man? Are you doing alright?" Lance tried again when Keith made no move or even a single sound. He ignored the scowls coming from Pidge and instead tried to coax Keith out of the corner he was hiding in. Lance wasn't even sure if Keith had his memories in tack or was still stuck in the mindset that Zarkon had forced upon him. A caged, vicious, wild animal.

Nothing more.

"Keith? Are you there?" Lance shrugged off Hunk's hand on his shoulder, when Lance tried to kneel closer to Keith. He shot a short glare at the other boy, only feeling slightly guilty by Hunk's look of hurt. Lance kneeled down, directly in front of where Keith had buried his face into his arms and knees. "Keith?"

Keith flinched.

At least that was a sign that he could hear Lance.

"Hey man, are you doing alright?" Keith curled tighter in himself when Lance got closer to him, but still refused to say anything else. Lance frowned in annoyance, feeling his patience beginning to fall. To be fair though, his patience had been declining with every passing day and every hardship that came their way. There was only so much he could take before he was bound to explode.

It was only natural.

"Come on man. Stop being a Quiznack and hiding from us. For God's sake, we've spent all this time searching for you, *rescuing* you and now you give us the silent treatment? What gives?" Lance snorted, when Keith's body froze.

“Lance.” Shiro hissed from behind him but Lance kept his attention on Keith.

“Is that any way to treat your team? After all we’ve done for you? Seriously man, we could have *left* you behind. We didn’t *have* to save you!” Lance growled, when Keith still tried to ignore his presence. This wasn’t fair to Lance; this wasn’t fair to his team.

“Lance, stop it.” Shiro said.

Still Lance ignored it.

“Do you know how worried our team was? And how relieved they were to see you? And now you’re just ignoring us?” Lance continued, feeling his anger beginning to topple over. He saw a small twitch in Keith’s arms and his ears slowly began to raise.

“Seriously, this is pathetic. You’re not worthy of the Red Paladin title.” Lance finally hissed and it was as if a pin had dropped. Shiro and Hunk were on edge, ready to step in and intervene, but before either of them could make a move, there was a movement between Keith and Lance and all hell broke loose.

A snarl ripped from Keith’s throat and he pounced on Lance before anyone could even blink. Lance’s eyes widened when he felt Keith’s claws dig into his arms and a body toppling him to the ground. Lance could feel the air whooshing out of his body when his back slammed against the cold, hard ground. Upon looking up at Keith snarling down at him, Lance felt a small smirk beginning to worm its way on his face.

He was staring directly into familiar *purple* eyes.

“What’s the matter furball? Galra got your tongue?” Lance laughed bitterly, struggling against the death grip that Keith had on his arms. Despite being pinned down with no room to move, Lance was feeling his anger and frustration starting to fuel into something else.

Keith’s lips curled and his nose scrunched (*Lance would have said it was adorable but he doubted that was what Keith wanted to hear*) up in anger.

“What did you say?” Keith hissed darkly, eyes flashing dangerously when he pressed close to Lance. There was a heavy pressure on Lance’s arms that he should probably be worried about but he wasn’t.

“What’s that? I’m sorry, I don’t understand gibberish *Keith*.” Lance smirked, then huffed when Keith’s claws dug painfully into his arms. Still, Keith had yet to do anything else in the manner of attacking Lance.

He was still in there.

“Shut your mouth.” Keith snarled leaning down until he was face to face with Lance. His confusion was beginning to overpower his fury when he noticed the look of smug satisfaction on Lance rather than a look of fear and terror. Keith slammed Lance down harshly, enough to most likely give the boy a concussion, but Lance’s gaze never wavered.

“Aw, c’mon Keithy boy, is that all you got? Looks like someone’s getting soft in their age.” Lance smirked causing Keith to growl darkly. His canines were seen under his curled lips and his eyes were staring directly down at Lance; more specifically his neck. Behind the two, the others were in a panic, unsure if they should intervene with Keith in such a deadly attack position over Lance. More than anything, they felt utterly useless in this moment.

A loud roar came from within Keith, startling Lance for a moment. A cruel grin slipped over Keith's lips and his eyes narrowed.

"What's the matter *Lance*? Scared yet? **Are you scared that I'm going to kill you?**" Keith snarled, watching as Lance's face paled and his eyes widened. Keith stomach churned and a pit of darkness was filled in his heart and stomach as the small ounce of fear in his friend.

"As if. You couldn't be scary, no matter how hard you tried." Lance snorted, face immediately morphing into one of boredom rather than terror. For a second Keith pulled back in confusion, loosening his grip on Lance, giving Lance just enough time.

He'd have to unfortunately thank Keith later for teaching him these moves.

Lance struck his foot out and caught Keith in the gut. Keith's breath was knocked out of him, causing him to hunch over and allowing Lance the chance to move and strike. Instantly, Keith felt himself being shoved forward and his arms were pinned to his back. He thrashed wildly, feeling his heart racing erratically when more sets of hands were pushing his arms down. *What were they doing? Why were they attacking him?*

"Get off me! Get away from me!" Keith hissed, trying to hide the horror in his voice. There was a slight crack towards the end of his sentence and Lance swallowed.

"No! Not until you let us help you, you jerk!" Lance grunted, trying to keep Keith down with the help of Shiro and Hunk. His eyes locked on to the tormented eyes of his teammates, scowling at the tears in them.

"Stop it! Stop it!" Keith shrieked, wiggling desperately from under his captors. But they were at the advantage being on top of him, and outnumbering. His heart was frantic by now and his pupils were blown wide.

It was then that a small sob tore through his throat.

Then everyone froze.

"Stop it. Stop it. Stop it." Keith moaned repeatedly and Hunk jerked his hands away so fast, as if Keith had *burned* him. Even Shiro's hands were hesitated and trembling slightly above Keith's body. Lance could feel his own throat tightening and his eyes watering, but no tears fell.

Slowly, Lance and Shiro released Keith but Keith remained limp on the floor. The two hesitated with a shared look of horror, before Lance and Shiro were both reaching out to grab Keith. Upon touch, Keith kicked and squirmed to get out of their grasp but he was blinded by pain (*so much pain*) and grief. However, it was to his surprise that Shiro and Lance didn't pin Keith to the floor. Rather they pulled him upright and then pulled him *into his arms*.

It was a hug.

Why would they hug him?

A hug.

Keith froze when he felt Hunk and Lance join the hug, squishing him against Lance and Shiro. His entire body began to shake and tremble as the arms continued wrapping around him.

"Oh Keith. Please don't do this. Don't keep us out." Shiro murmured softly, from where he was resting against Keith's head. "You don't have to do this alone anymore. Please don't shut

us out.”

“You’re our friend. Now and forever.” Lance nodded in agreement, causing Keith’s lower lip to tremble and his vision blurred with tears. He couldn’t even remember the last time he had felt this emotional or this *vulnerable* before.

Then for the first time in months Keith allowed himself to cry.

Keith’s eyes had remained purple the entire time.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith never felt more awkward in his life. At the moment, he was seated on a table, allowing Allura to take samples of his blood and examine his body. The team had done their best to try and explain what had happened over the past few weeks, but there was so many holes that even Keith couldn’t explain. Especially with the holes in his memories.

Those holes made Keith sick to his stomach.

He couldn’t remember what had been done to him. Or his time with Zarkon. Or what *he* had done during these few weeks. No matter how hard he had wracked his brain or tried to force himself to remember, there were bits and pieces that would not come back to him and Keith was more than a little terrified of what he could find out.

“Well, at this point your DNA hasn’t changed since you’ve returned to us. Neither has your physiology. Well, except for your eyes.” Allura sighed and pushed the screens away from her. She rubbed at her temples tiredly, while Keith awkwardly sat on the table in nothing but a pair of Shiro’s sweatpants. Though, they looked more like capris on Keith, with his new height he was much taller than Shiro and clothes were hard to find.

“What does that mean?” Keith scratched at the inside of his wrists, eyes darting around the room nervously. Shiro, Lance and the others were all situated in the doorway with Lance boredly drawing on the wall. Hunk was sitting cross-legged with his back against Pidge who was fiddling with a computer in hand. Shiro was itching with hands crossed over his chest, watching Keith and Allura.

“Unfortunately, I think you will remain in this form.” Allura replied quietly and Keith could feel his heart drop to the floor. He was more than a bit embarrassed to admit that he was hoping that there could be a way to reverse this, and that he could pretend that none of this had happened. Pretend that they could go back to normal.

“So, basically, Keith is stuck as a Galra? Forever?” Lance finally turned his attention towards Keith, by standing up and walking over. He attempted to hide his expression, but with quickened reflexes, Keith caught the disappointed look on Lance’s face. His gut churned but he decided to keep quiet.

“Unless we can get Zarkon or Haggar to reverse the effects, yes.” Allura said, much to Keith’s disappointment.

Lance frowned and Keith’s heart sunk even lower.

“But I still don’t understand why his DNA remained the same even after the change into Galra.” Pidge spoke up, voice soft and gentle in the medic bay.

Keith frowned in confusion looking back at their teammate.

“What?”

He noticed the uneasy looks on Shiro, Hunk and Allura’s face and the guilty expression on Pidge. As if they realized that they probably shouldn’t have said that. Keith couldn’t help but feel as if the team were hiding something from him. Something important.

“What do you mean?” Keith felt a small growl slip into his words, startling the others.

“Um, well, when we compared your old DNA to this new modified DNA, we noticed that the basic structure was the same. As if you had Galra DNA before.” Pidge explained nervously.

“But that’s impossible. I was obviously human. Your machines must be broken.” Keith scoffed, attempting to hide the nervousness in his voice.

“We’ve tested it several times Keith. I don’t know why it keeps telling us that you originally had Galra DNA, but that’s the truth.” Pidge shrugged.

“But that’s impossible!”

“We don’t know that.” Allura chimed in, causing Keith to snap his attention back to Allura.

“What are you saying then? Are you trying to tell me I was a Galra all this time? That I was born a Galra?” Keith practically hissed at her, causing her to narrow her eyes at his attitude. At this, the others began to move towards them, afraid of what could happen. Allura’s eyes suddenly widened at Keith’s words before she was turning back towards her screens and typing furiously.

“I was *always* a human.” Keith’s breath was quickening and becoming slightly more labored. “I was never anything else! I was just like Shiro, and Lance and Hunk!”

“Maybe you’re making a point.” Allura murmured distractedly, while Pidge joined her by her side. Keith frowned at the two when they made no further comment before looking back at Shiro and the others.

“You believe me right?”

Shiro was the first to place a hand on his shoulder. “Of course Keith. But we don’t understand what this means for you and we just want to be able to understand, okay?” It wasn’t the answer that Keith was looking for, but he didn’t want the day to be any more awkward than it already was.

“Okay.”

The group sat in a few moments of silence before Keith decided to hop off the table. Thankfully, no one became defensive or followed his every move (*that was actually worse than being alone*).

“Can I go now?”

Shiro hesitated, eyeing Keith and sighed. “Sure. Join us for dinner though.”

Keith exited the room without answering Shiro with a heavy heart.

x.x.V.x.x

He could see two figures standing above him as he had to look up at them. They were in a

sandy area, because he could feel the sand in between his toes. For some reason, he had no shoes on and yet the hot sand wasn't bother him or burning his feet. There was a cool breeze out and he could smell some sort of unfamiliar (but they were so familiar) flower in the breeze.

The wind picked up, causing his hair (purple hair) to blow around his face.

His nose scrunched up when his hair tickled against it and his ears twitched (big ears on top of his head). There was the sound of a laughter, so familiar and warm, from in front of him. Then suddenly he was raised higher and higher in the air, so high that he could see the sandy mountains behind him (some green and luscious with life).

***“Hello, little one. Is your nose ticklish?”** Keith could understand the language but he recognized that it wasn't English. He felt a smile on his lips and laughter bubbling in his throat. He raised his arms up and down, as one of the figures held out before their face.*

Gentle yellow eyes stared softly into Keith and Keith attempted to snatch the tuft of hair on the figure's head.

Keith giggled when the figure then tickled him under his chin, before pulling him close to his chest. The other figure beside them laughed (with a laugh sounding like bells ringing in the night).

***“Leave him alone. He is my precious sunshine.”** The other figure said, smiling down at Keith who nestled into the larger figure's chest. Their body structure and familiarity made him feel safe.*

Safe and loved.

Two things he thought he hadn't felt in a long time.

“Darling, of course he's our sunshine. He will be the universe's greatest treasure.”

***“Yes! I will!”** Keith found himself crying out in excitement, bouncing in the figure's arms. The two figures laughed with him, before the smaller of the two figures caressed his cheek, tickling the spotted skin.*

***“Of course, my sunshine. Never forget how much we love you.”** The figure smiled, bright purple eyes sparkling with happiness and Keith grinned. He leaned over to press a kiss on the figure's cheek.*

“Of course mama. I will always love you.”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith awoke with a start, heart beating rapidly in his chest and eyes wide. Sweat dripped down his neck while his chest heaved. He stared around the familiar bed room of Allura's castle, where he had previously been staying, relaying the memories in his mind, over and over.

The dream had felt so real.

Too real.

As if it had been a memory.

That night, Keith didn't join them for dinner. Instead, he sat on his bed shaking and

unable to fall back asleep. He ignored Shiro's soft knocking on his door.

x.x.V.x.x

"Whom do you serve?"

"Zarkon." Keith's voice sounded nothing like it had before. Monotone and void of any and all expressions. His eyes were zeroed in on a trembling prisoner pressed up against the wall of an arena. His body was stiff as a board, awaiting the orders of his one and only commander.

"Excellent. And what must you do?"

"Cleanse this universe." Keith replied automatically. The phrase had been burned into his brain by memory and he could repeat it at any time of day if asked. It was a phrase that was forever engraved into his DNA, into his personality now. It was a phrase that he lived, slept and died by. There was nothing else for him, other than to serve the Galra Empire and serve his master.

"Yes. Now kill the prisoner."

The roaring of the crowd around Keith no longer made him flinch. Instead, their noises fueled his anger; his animosity. It was like an addicting drug that Keith couldn't stop. More cheering. More adrenaline. More fights. More blood.

More.

More.

More.

Keith moved with precision and instinct, immediately striking against the prisoner's jugular. The prisoner hadn't even a chance to scream before its eyes were rolling back in its head and blood dripping down the gaping hole in its neck. Keith was almost disappointed by the ease that came in his killing and he frowned at the blood coating his hand. The prisoner dropped to the floor in a heap while Keith felt a snarl build in his throat. It wasn't enough. He needed more.

More.

More.

MORE.

Keith's hands clenched at his sides while his vision darkened. The guards within the arena hesitated, putting their weapons between them and Keith. Keith's body heaved and his mouth clenched shut while his legs bent in a defensive crouch.

Both guards within the arena, hesitated with shaking hands when Keith turned to face them. He could barely hear the roaring of the crowds over the sound of the blood pumping in his ears. His gaze soon locked on the targets in front of him.

His prey.

More.

More.

More.

He needed more.

With the sound of his master's laughter in his ears, Keith lunched at his prey, aiming for their hearts. The last thing he heard were the sounds of screams filling the arena.

x.x.V.x.x.

“NO!” Keith violently, jumped back from Shiro when Shiro tried to touch him. He’d frozen in the hallway when the memory had suddenly taken over his body. The memory came sharp and without warning, rendering his body completely immobile while he watched in horror. Flashes of his time in the arena, of his time with *Zarkon* played over and over in Keith’s memory and he couldn’t do anything to stop them.

It was only when the image of mutilated guards became one of Shiro reaching out to Keith, did Keith finally react.

“Keith!” Shiro yelled when his friend flinched away from him after being frozen in the hallway. Even though Keith hadn’t reverted back to his animalistic Galra form since awakening in Red, Keith was more hesitant than before to be around the team. He rarely joined them for dinner anymore. In fact, Keith was more closed off than he had ever been before and it was hurting everyone. No one knew what Keith was going through or what he was remembering and it was tearing them apart, knowing that he was hurting and there was nothing anyone could do to help.

“Keith?”

“No! Stay back!” Keith cried out, hands over his face and body shaking. Shiro swallowed, pausing in a motion to comfort his friend by Keith’s strange attitude. Just seconds ago, Keith had been quiet and immobile.

Was he remembering?

“Keith, buddy. I’m staying right here, alright? I’m not getting any closer. Just calm down, okay?” Shiro’s hands rose calmly, while he remained where he was. He was afraid that Keith would try to bolt as fast as he could, but thankfully Keith was frozen where he stood.

“No, don’t – don’t come closer.” Keith choked and Shiro’s heart broke at the pain in his friend’s voice.

“I’m not. I’m staying right here, buddy.” Shiro said slowly. *Was this how he looked?* “But Keith, you gotta tell me what’s going on. What just happened here?”

“I can’t – I – I remember – I can’t.” Keith stammered, eyes wide and pupils blown out while his hands shook beside his head. Shiro’s heart thumped nervously in his chest.

“Can’t what? Did you remember something? With Zarkon?”

“I remember – I can’t -no Shiro!” Keith choked, tears burning in his eyes when the strength of the memory became too much for him. The sound of his friend’s voice was the only thing that was keeping him from falling off the edge. “You’ve gotta – you’ve gotta put me in a pod! Or – or a cage! You have to lock me up!”

Shiro’s heart skipped a beat and he stumbled back. “What?!”

Keith focused his eyes, full of fear, on Shiro and his face turned into one of desperation. “You have to lock me up, oh god Shiro! Why did you ever let me out? It’s not safe! It’s not safe! *You have to lock me up!*” Shiro was more than mildly disturbed by the desperation in Keith’s expression as he stumbled in Shiro’s general direction. While his instincts told him to run, Shiro forced himself to remain firm in his position until Keith’s hands were gripping his shoulders.

“Please Shiro, you have to! It’s not safe if you keep me out. No one here is safe; you can’t trust me! Please!” Keith cried and Shiro jerked back. However, rather than turn away Shiro put his own hands on Keith’s shoulders and gripped him just as tight.

“Keith, no. There’s a reason why we let you out. You’re better now.” Shiro said. Keith merely shook his head.

“No I’m dangerous Shiro. I’m a danger to everyone here. It’s not safe keeping me out.” Keith pleaded, gripping Shiro’s arms tightly, enough to draw blood from his good arm.

“Keith –”

“*NO!*” Keith snarled, eyes flashing yellow for a split second and his grip tightened painfully on Shiro’s arms. Instinctively, Shiro’s robotic arm began to glow and he had shoved it in between himself and Keith, knocking Keith backwards. The yellow in Keith’s eyes dimmed back to the familiar irises that Shiro knew and slowly they filled with horror and regret.

Shiro felt like the worst person in the universe.

“Keith, I-I’m sorry.” Shiro whispered when Keith’s breath hitched, eyes trained on Shiro’s glowing arm.

“No, you’re right. I’m a danger to you all.” Keith’s voice broke and Shiro simply wanted to die. There was nothing else that could make him feel any worse than he did in that moment. “Shiro, I *killed* people. I killed hundreds of people in the arena. And I wanted *more*.” Keith’s hands were shaking so much at his sides that if he were to hold something it would surely crash to the floor.

“Keith, that wasn’t your fault.” Shiro said while his arm began to dim. Keith shook his head.

“But it was! I could remember. I can remember every single person I killed and when that wasn’t enough I killed *guards* and *soldiers*.” Keith whispered. “It was never enough; I couldn’t get enough. I wanted more – Shiro I *needed* more. I killed people! *I’m a murderer!*”

“No, Keith!” Shiro hissed, reaching out to grab Keith’s shoulders. The other boy slumped forward, too defeated to fight back. “Keith I understand how you’re feeling, but you’re not a monster. You’re not a murderer.”

“I am!” Keith moaned. “How can you say that I’m not when I *killed* all those people without hesitation.”

“Because I did the same thing.” Keith’s entire body stopped trembling and his breath caught in his throat. “If you’re a monster then so am I. Keith I may not remember them all right now, but I know – God do I know – that I killed so many people in that arena. I fought and fought until there was nothing but bloodshed, and if for one minute you think that you’re a monster then we’re in the same boat.”

“No, Shiro, it’s not the same thing –”

“It’s not. But I still killed people.” Shiro interrupted before Keith could fall back into his hole of despair. “We’ve both committed atrocities that we regret, Keith, but if we let them consume us then we *will* become those monsters. You can’t let this take you Keith. Do you regret what has happened?”

Keith’s eyes were shinning with unshed tears. “Y-Yes but –”

“Then there’s nothing you can do but fight this. Keith you must fight Zarkon’s control and you can’t let it consume you.” Shiro pleaded, feeling tears gather in his eyes for the first time. “Please, if not for yourself then for Lance, Pidge and Hunk. You’re our family Keith and they love you. This hasn’t changed that. It hasn’t changed that you’re my family. As a Galra or human.”

“But aren’t you afraid?” Keith whispered.

“Of course I am Keith.” Shiro softly admitted. “I’m afraid of Haggar. I’m afraid of Zarkon taking control of the universe. I’m afraid of never seeing Earth again. But most of all, I’m afraid that when I go to sleep and wake up you’ll be gone again. Or that I lose anyone else from my family. I’m terrified Keith, but not of you. Never of you.”

For the second time in less than a week, Keith burst into tears and cried.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith could remember Zarkon’s hands crawling all over him.

He could remember every ounce of white hot pain he felt.

He remembered the arena.

And the screams of agony from his victims and the smell of death.

Keith remembered almost everything.

And more than ever, he wished he could forget.

x.x.V.x.x

You’re a monster.

They’re afraid of you.

You’ll be the death of them.

Their murderer.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith was hot. Way too hot, and he could feel the sweat dripping from his ears and into his shirt. He considered moving somewhere cooler, where there were less bodies surrounding him. Although, that would involve untangling himself from the mass of bodies strewn around him. Which meant it would require a lot of effort.

And his teammates had gone through *all* that effort just to get him to sleep in the same room as him. It had required a mini wrestling match between Keith and the four other paladins with some interference from Allura, just to get Keith to lay down. Then it had taken *hours* of talking and pleading to get Keith to stay.

Once Keith was nestled on the bed with blankets, he had been more than surprised when Pidge, Hunk, Lance and even Shiro had plopped themselves on the bed right beside Keith, tangling their limbs together and meshing bodies against one another. Keith was more or less trapped with Lance sprawled over both of his legs and Pidge tucked against his side, holding onto one of his arms like a stuffed animal. Hunk was curled up on his other side, laying on top of Keith's arm, causing the blood flow to stop and his arm to begin tingling. Lastly, Shiro was curled up with Keith's head on his chest and snoring loudly.

His teammates were exhausted.

And everyone looked *so* peaceful.

With a small smile, Keith decided it was best if he simply remained where he was without disturbing his exhausted teammates. Slowly, realizing his own exhaustion, Keith closed his eyes and fell into a deep sleep, feeling more secure and warm than he ever had before.

He fell asleep with a smile on his face and surrounded by the people he called *family*.

x.x.V.x.x

When I look at you, I don't know what you'll see in me.

Chapter End Notes

There we go! See, I'm not only capable of just angst. I think. Hopefully that was enough fluff to give your poor little hearts a small break, because it's not over. Oh no, no. There's still 3 chapters left and possibly a sequel depending on if people want it. Mwhahahahaha, I have so much planned >:). Also, some shameful self promotion, but while you wait for chapter 8, if you haven't already checked out the oneshot I've wrote, "Run Run Lost Boy" you totally should. There's more family moments, lots of angst and tons of fluff, plus it's a Peter Pan AU so what could go wrong with that? Seriously, if you're looking for something else Voltron to read from me, that's a good one-shot to check out or come find me on tumblr!

So I hope you all enjoyed this chapter. It was extra long for my lovely readers, but I actually struggled a lot with it and found myself rewriting it several times over. I was excited for it but I'm also really nervous about how you all thought about it. Which means, don't forget to comment or tell me your thoughts! They really do help me and mean a lot, every time I read one.

Thanks and peaceout!

All the Kids Say, "Please Stop You're Scaring Me"

Chapter Notes

So again, this is a bit overdue. Sorry, sorry about that. I haven't been feeling all that great lately and feeling pretty sick and exhausted the past few weeks and this week I just had no energy to do anything. Even write. I apologize for it being updated a bit later. But hey, I made it a bit longer than normal so there's a nice bonus for all you lovely readers. I hope this chapter makes up for the wait because it was really great to write, even more so than the last chapter. I was so excited when I finally got around to writing this and I couldn't stop! So be prepared, hahaha.

And thank you as always for this amazing support of this fic. Seriously, you guys really gave me the energy and motivation to write this chapter. Your comments always make me laugh, smile and be happy. Your kudos and support are like love and make me so happy. And just the support and readers of this fic make me so happy. Thank you guys so much for all the motivation and thoughts. I love to read your thoughts, likes, comments and ideas for this fic. Seriously, keep it up. Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They say it takes a storm to make a rainbow.

I'm caught up the storm in your eyes.

x.x.V.x.x

It wasn't back to normal and it wasn't perfect.

Even though everyone had been praying and hoping that after their bonding fest (as Keith specifically called it) everything would return to normal, it didn't. Keith was still a Galra and towered over everyone, unable to fit into his old uniform anymore. Zarkon was still on the loose, most likely tracking them. Allura still didn't have all of the answers to Keith's DNA and worst of all: they were running low on Space Goo.

"We're going to starve; the worst possible way to die and it's all because Coran couldn't keep the ship supplied." Hunk moaned into the table where everyone was gathered around. He could hear the sounds of everyone's stomach grumbling including his own, which was particularly loud.

"Not to mention, that Zarkon is kinda on our trail." Pidge rolled their eyes from where they were seated beside Matt and their father. Matt grinned at his sibling, hiding the grin behind a hand while Shiro snorted. Luckily, Shiro and his old team had gotten the time to sit down and talk, and his team were more than a little surprised when Shiro had pulled them both into a hug rather than handshake. He'd told them all about Voltron and what they missed, excluding the parts about the holes in his own memory. At the moment, Matt and Commander Holt were more of less caught up and up to speed with everyone else.

"Oh yes, right. Good point." Hunk mumbled into the table. "We're out of food. We've got Zarkon and his evil, crazy witch lady on our tails. *And* we still haven't found a way to help

Keith.”

Keith looked up from where he had positioned his hands into two “L” shapes, while Lance was attempting to flick a triangle piece of paper through his hands. He ignored Lance’s cheer when the paper flew through the gap between his large hands and hit him directly in the chest.

“Help me?” Keith cocked his head, before turning a threatening gaze to Lance who was currently whispering, “*How can he be that fucking cute? Es un gato.*” His eyes narrowed while Lance nervously backed away and pretended to whistle.

“Well, yeah. Do you wanna remain a big giant, Galra?” Hunk asked, finally pulling his face up and off the table. At this Keith frowned, because of course in his heart he wanted to be a human again. He wanted to see his normal skin and the freckles across his cheeks and nose that he’d always been embarrassed of. He wanted fingers with nails down to the stubs rather than claws. He wanted *normal* small ears on his head. Most of all, Keith didn’t want to be afraid of mirrors.

He’d already smashed the one in his room because he couldn’t bear to look at his own reflection.

“No.” Keith admitted.

“Keith should get used to this form as should the rest of us.” Allura interjected before Keith could say anymore. Keith blinked and focused his attention on her. The others did too. “We’re unsure of how to reverse any effects made to his body, especially considering Haggard’s magic used. Unless we know for sure, Keith may very well be stuck in this form and we cannot work as a team if that makes you uncomfortable.” Allura’s eyes narrowed in on everyone in the room, watching as they squirmed and looked guilty.

“Allura’s right. Especially if Keith really did have Galra DNA before –”

“Which I didn’t.” Keith hissed but Pidge ignored him.

“This may be permanent.” Pidge continued. They looked over at Keith, feeling their heart twist painfully at the conflicting emotions on Keith’s face. “We may as well get used to this, because this is Keith no matter how fluffy.”

“Hey.” Keith whined, causing the others to laugh in relief. A tiny smile graced Keith’s lips and he decided to keep his own thoughts of worry to himself.

However, Keith’s body froze when an aroma was picked up in the air and suddenly flew over his nose. His ears perked up while his nose rose in order to sniff the air around him. Keith’s eye glazed over and his body began to work on instinct alone, while he continued to sniff the air.

The others all stopped in what they were doing when Keith began to loudly sniff the air, placing his hands on the table. Shiro was the first to notice the glazed look in Keith’s eyes and was already moving to stand. He reached out to Keith when Keith pushed his chair back, all the while with head tilted and nose raised.

“What is he doing?” Lance asked when Pidge shot him a dark look. However, he simply shrugged at them.

Before anyone could answer Lance, Keith was already up and out of the room. He walked down the hallway, still smelling the air, with one hand trailing along the wall. The others immediately followed behind him in confusion, each giving other looks, until the group was

stopped in front of a door.

In front of Lance's door.

"Why'd he stop?" Hunk asked and his eyes widened. "Oh my god, do you think he smelt the enemy? Could there be an enemy on this ship? Is it in Lance's room? Where exactly could they be right now, this very instant?" Pidge snorted at Hunk's rambling while Lance sighed loudly.

"Keith is just being a nosy little furball." He crossed his arms over his chest while Keith growled softly, and scratched at Lance's closed door. "Oi, why the hell do you need to get into *my* room? Back off." Keith apparently hadn't heard Lance or was choosing to ignore him, because he continued to scratch at the door, as if that would *magically* open it.

"Idiot." Lance smirked.

His smirk was short-lived.

As Keith realized that his tactics weren't working, he instead opted for a more *violent* route and punched his fist straight through the control panel by Lance's door. Instantly, the control panel fizzled and cracked and the door was opening. While Lance gaped in horror, Pidge was roaring with laughter and even Shiro had an amused smirk on his lips.

Keith entered the room before the door was even fully raised and sniffed the air. He paused in the center of the room, not caring for Lance's bed, creams or earphones and instead headed towards the dresser beside Lance's bed. In the background, Lance squawked and tried to run after him, only to be held back calmly by Hunk. Keith sniffed the entire dresser, bending down to get lower in the drawer on the dresser. Lance continued to protest loudly when Keith yanked open the drawer and began to dig through his armor, much to everyone else's concern and amusement. Tossing Lance's body suit and bits of armor aside, Keith's eyes widened when he came across what he was looking for and his nose wiggled.

Then in the next instant, Keith pulled out a small container, dug his hand into it and took a large mouthful of Hunk's homemade space goo casserole. If Keith were a bit more coherent, he would have been *mortified* by the purr that escaped him and the way his ears flattened in happiness.

"You were *hiding* food in here?!" Pidge was the first to recover from their shock as they turned to Lance with a sharp glare. Nervously, Lance attempted to back out of the room in order to escape, but he was stopped by the firm chests of Hunk *and* Shiro.

"Ah, well, funny story guys. You see, that's not actually food, it's ah, my bayard camouflaged as food..." Lance laughed nervously when Pidge stomped up beside him. He yelped when Pidge punched him (the pipsqueak had a *mean* punch for someone their size) and whined loudly.

"How much more are you hiding in here?" Pidge shoved Lance aside and immediately began to sift through Lance's entire room, already finding yet *another* container. Hunk frowned in disappointment at his friend while Shiro tiredly rubbed at his face, trying to hide his amusement. Keith remained where he was, purring and eating the cold casserole in his hand.

"Hold on a second, Keith, you're eating it all!" Hunk exclaimed and rushed around Lance towards Keith. Keith momentarily paused with cheeks full of food to stare down at Hunk. "Save some for us man, seriously!" Keith blinked at Hunk when Hunk made a move to grab some of the food. However, Keith raised the food higher, out of Hunk's reach, thanks to his newfound height.

Instantly Hunk huffed and began to wrestle Keith for the food. “Seriously man, quit hogging all the food. We need that!”

Shiro covered his mouth with one hand while his shoulders shook with laughter, once Lance had teamed up with Keith to try and steal the casserole. Pidge continued to scavenge for more containers and soon the entire room was filled with a light, carefree atmosphere.

It almost felt normal.

x.x.V.x.x

However, it wasn't always like that.

Sometimes Keith had bad days and *really* bad days.

His Galra instincts were more in tuned now and it was clear that the attempt at reprogramming in Keith's memories and brain was far from gone. Keith often found himself falling back into his Galra form, without any coherent or clear thoughts. Usually this was due to being startled, angered quickly or fighting.

Keith had all but given up trying to spar with any of his teammates anymore. He used to practice on his own, however every now and again Keith would spar with someone. Whether it was to teach them how to fight or teach moves, or to spar with full strength with Shiro in order to improve, Keith sparred with *someone* in the past. Now, Keith didn't even spar alone.

He didn't trust himself.

Keith stopped all together after he'd tackled Shiro to the floor effortlessly, when Shiro managed to land a good kick to his abdomen. Surprised, Keith had been winded and his mind went blank. When he came back to, he was snarling and had Shiro pinned to the floor with his claws digging into Shiro's shirt. Shiro's eyes were wide with a hint of fear (*he's afraid of you*) but he wasn't moving to free himself. Keith could hear the others anxiously waiting behind them before Keith scrambled off Shiro in horror.

He locked himself in his room for three days after that.

When Keith finally emerged, no one commented on his drooping ears, his messy hair or the red rims around his eyes. Instead, everyone continued to plan for what their next move was and Keith silently decided to stop sparing with anyone.

Keith was also startled more easily now. Like a scared animal. It was unusual to see their friend jump much easier than before. Every little loud noise. Every slam of the door. Every time someone turned the lights on too bright.

Most of the time, Keith was okay and simply jumped or twitched (Lance often liked to laugh at how visual with his emotions, Keith had become with his new ears). Although, every now and again, Keith would be so startled that he would revert back into his Galra mindset. During this mind set, Keith often ran off to hide rather than attack, and he'd found some fairly creative places to hide. Once Shiro had found Keith curled up in a nook between the toes of Red's paws.

That was something else that was new. Everyone had a close bond with their lions and their connections were stronger than ever before. But with Red and Keith, it was as the two were on the same level, especially when Keith went primal in his Galra instincts. Most often it was Red that Keith found solace and comfort in when his instincts took over, rather than turn to any of the paladins. Keith and Red seemed to be able to communicate without words and with a few noises or

purrs from Keith. The others could feel emotions and directions from their bond with their lions, and often relied on instinct but with Keith and Red it was as if the two could *understand* each other. No one bothered to question the bond between Keith and Red even if some felt it was a bit odd, more so than others.

Keith had his good days and he had his bad days.

The others were just trying to take everything in with a smile and a stride.

Unfortunately, today was turning out to be one of Keith's bad days. Keith had barely been able to sleep with an unbearable pain in his head and memories invading his dreams like nightmares, causing him to awaken at least every hour. With the lack of sleep, Keith was also stressing about Zarkon's plans for him and his team. They hadn't heard a word about any Galra ships following them and lost track of Zarkon's ship. This filled Keith up with unease because he *knew* that Zarkon wouldn't give up that easily. He knew that Zarkon must be planning *something*.

He was unsure of what it was.

So of course, with Keith's stress through the roof and the lack of sleep was a combination that was explosive. Ready to go off at any second. Which is precisely what happen when Lance thought it would be a good idea to start a food fight at breakfast (thankfully the ship's supplies had been restocked and refueled before anyone could revert to cannibalism).

After the first glob of food was thrown against Pidge's face, much to Matt and his father's horror, the paladins merely grinned upon remembering what had finally been the key to bringing Voltron together. With a smirk of their own, Pidge had scooped out a large spoonful of goo and flung it with deadly precision straight at Lance, who luckily ducked at the last second. The goo splattered heavily against a laughing Hunk, causing him to gawk at Pidge.

"Pidge, I thought we were friends." Hunk placed a hand to his dripping chest in mock hurt. Pidge snickered, already restocking their spoon by stealing goo from an amused Matt's plate. Beside Matt's father, Shiro laughed into his hand.

"You should know there aren't any friends in *Food War!*" Pidge cackled and flung another spoonful of goo, which graciously landed in Hunk's mouth. Hunk swallowed heavily and licked his lip before grabbing his own handful of goo off his own plate. Like the others, Hunk didn't notice how Keith tiredly ignored the fight and attempted to curl in on himself. However, Hunk did throw the handful of goo in Shiro's direction when the other man was preoccupied with laughing.

Sputtering (much to the enjoyment of his old team who had never witnessed Shiro so laidback and carefree, even before Kerberos), Shiro was quicker than the others and throwing a plateful of goo at Hunk, Pidge and Lance. The three never stood a chance against his aim and suffered goo to the face. Lance was the first to retaliate with a loud, and sharp battle cry that caused Keith to flatten his ears on his head.

Everyone besides Keith managed to hide themselves behind a plate, table or chair at the table as the food came into full swing. By now, even Matt was enjoying the fight between the group of friends and ducking behind chairs with a chuckle in order to avoid goo hitting him. Lance and Hunk eventually teamed up to try and pour a rather large pile of goo down the backs of Shiro and Pidge's shirt, only to be stopped as Commander Holt and Matt shoved some food in their faces. Pidge practically cackled with laughter and would have fallen over if not for Matt.

"Take that you space blobs!" Pidge laughed, ducking to avoid a spoonful of goo thrown

at them from Lance. Shiro proceeded to hold Lance in a tight held lock while Hunk flicked a pile of goo along Lance's neck, causing Lance to cry out in betrayal.

"Hunk! I never expected such betrayal from you of all people!" Lance cried as he squirmed to get free from Shiro's grasp. When his arms flailed around in order to break free, he hit the edge of a plate of uneaten good, which went sailing directly at Keith.

Keith managed to see the plate coming *flying* at him from the corner of his eyes before his entire vision turned black.

The entire atmosphere changed in only a second when Keith suddenly swiped at the plate, claws smashing the plate into pieces, before it could hit him. Keith's chair toppled backwards and hit the floor with a harsh thud when Keith scrambled out of his chair. His hands were clenched in fists while his lips curled back in a snarl. His *yellow* eyes locked onto his goo-covered teammates and everyone froze. Commander Holt instinctively wrapped an arm around Matt and Pidge while Shiro let go of Lance. Keith remained snarling, breathing heavy and eyes locked onto everyone.

"Keith?" Shiro whispered cautiously. He cursed himself for not thinking that a *food fight* would startle Keith. In fact, he was ashamed to realize that *no one* had thought about this, especially with Keith's mood already so sour this morning.

Keith took a moment to growl at the humans in front of him, internally smirking at the scent of fear from a few of them, before his heart ached. Instantly, he turned and bolted from the room, most likely to hide again.

Shiro and Lance reached out with one arm, words dying on their throat and guilt written all over their faces. By now, no one bothered to chase after Keith, knowing it would only make matters worse. Everyone had learned that it was best to just let Keith cool off by himself sometimes and come to them when he was ready. Only then could they apologize and try to fix things.

Silently, several people wondered if they could *ever* fix things.

x.x.V.x.x

Hunk knew it was probably not the smartest plan that he had ever come up with. Actually, what he was about to do was probably in the top *five* stupidest plans he had. Right after the time that he and Lance had almost blown up a Land Rover owned by the Garrison, in hopes of trying to catch a stray dog.

Despite Hunk constantly having to turn around and walk back a few feet, before berating himself and turning back around to keep walking forward. Every few minutes Hunk managed to get in an internal argument about the pros and cons for his latest plan, each one turned him back around in the opposite direction. Hence why it had taken him over two hours to walk up to Keith's door.

He's your friend, he needs someone to comfort him right now.

No, what he needs is some alone time. Just Keith, a pile of blankets and the darkness of his room.

That's not really healthy...

No, huh. It's not isn't it?

No. What he needs is for us to be there for him.

We are. We totally are.

When he needs it most?

...Yes?

Hunk sighed to himself as his feet began to drag himself in front of Keith's door and it appeared that his body had made up his mind for him. He knew that it wasn't healthy to leave Keith to sulk for as long as he did whenever something went wrong. Though Hunk would never admit it out loud, he was worried that Keith would revert back to his Galra mindset *completely* if he continued to figure things out himself.

He wanted Keith; not an animalistic version of his friend.

Hesitantly, Hunk found himself knocking on Keith's door while his heart raced in anticipation. The palms of his hands were already pooling with sweat and his breathing had picked up in pace. Hunk's anticipation only increased when the only answer that came from Keith's room was silence.

That wasn't good.

"Keith, hey man. Are you in there?" Hunk asked, praying that his voice didn't sound as shaky out loud as he felt. "It's Hunk. I just wanted to see how you were doing? Can I come in?" There was still no answer and for a split second Hunk considered turning around and heading back to his room. At least he had tried.

Then he frowned heavily. *Trying wasn't enough.*

With shoulders squared and chest out, Hunk stood even straighter than before and knocked once more.

"Keith I'm coming in now. You can't sulk for days in there." To his surprise, the door opened as soon as Hunk made a move to enter the room and he only stumbled a little upon entering Keith's dark room.

All the lights were off in Keith's room, making it pitch black due to the lack of windows. The only light coming into the room was from the hallway through the doorway now. Hunk could barely make out a lumped shape on the bed, with the blankets pulled off and curled around the figure. Hunk knew without a doubt that this was Keith and he swallowed thickly. Keith's entire body was covered by the blankets without even one hair sticking out. For a second, Hunk twiddled with his fingers, unsure of what to do.

"Uh, hey there Keith. It's pretty dark in here." Hunk said quickly. "Uh, want some lights on? It's probably not healthy laying in the dark all day. You'll probably get paler than Pidge." Hunk chuckled nervously as he rubbed the back of his head, fiddling with the ties to his headband. Still Keith remained motionless and would not speak to Hunk.

Hunk took this as a cue to keep trying and he hesitantly stepped towards Keith's bed. When the floor squeaked underneath his foot, Hunk saw Keith's body twitch on the blanket. *That's a good sign. At least he's not dead.*

"Or, well you'd be a pretty pale shade of purple I guess?" Hunk continued to ramble with each step that he took closer to Keith's bed. The lump of blankets continued to slightly shift. "Can

you tan, do you know? Like do you get a darker shade of purple or a lighter shade? Maybe you turn maroon if you burn? That'd look odd." Hunk made a face, not realizing how close he was to Keith's bed until bumping into the side of it. A low growl from the lump of blankets stopped Hunk completely. "Ah sorry," Hunk laughed. "I didn't mean that I was just curious. Like what if you got a bruise? Would it still be purple or maybe blue?"

The blankets moved a tiny bit and Hunk pretended to ignore the purple and yellow eyes peeking up at him. "I'm not entirely sure how any of that works. Maybe we should hit up a beach and sun tan. Do you think Allura would let us land on a beachy island, with lots of sand and water?" Hunk found himself taking a seat on the floor beside Keith's bed, aware that Keith's mismatched eyes were constantly on him.

"Maybe there would be bark or something we could use to make surfboards. Have you ever been before?" Hunk smiled at the silence but he could see Keith's face beginning to peek out from the blankets. *He hasn't attacked or lashed out so he's not mad anymore.* "Probably not. I bet you never saw much water living in the middle of a desert. I used to go all the time, back at home before coming to the Garrison. It was like a family tradition for us to go to this secluded little beach way out on the island. The waves were always perfect and mom and dad took sis and I there every single year."

Keith blinked owlshly at Hunk once his whole head had emerged out from within the blankets.

"It's a lot of fun. Takes a while to get used to, but I can always teach you." Hunk continued with a soft smile as he leaned his head against Keith's bed. "Not to brag or anything but I was pretty good – the reigning King at our local surf contests." Hunk grinned proudly when he heard a soft snort coming from Keith. "But you're gonna have to practice if you want to beat Lance, 'cause he's pretty awesome himself. *I taught him.* So he has that on you, but I bet you can learn."

For a while the two sat in a comfortable silence until Keith began to sit up. Hunk remained seated, knowing it was best not to startle Keith anymore. He waited patiently until Keith slid onto the ground beside him, blankets still wrapped loosely around his shoulders. One of Keith's eyes were still yellow but they were quickly fading to the same purple that his other eye was.

"Sorry about earlier." Keith finally whispered, voice hoarse from disuse.

"It was a bit frightening." Hunk admitted with a shrug. "But it's not your fault. You can't help the way you are now." Hunk finally looked over at Keith, noticing how Keith's claws were digging into the blanket.

"But I hate it. I hate *myself* for acting this way." Keith said and Hunk flinched.

"Keith no –"

"No! You don't get it! I'm – I'm a monster!" Keith hissed quickly, grip tightening on the blanket and eyes widening. "You're afraid of me! My own team is afraid of me, because I'm a goddamn freak and I might *kill* you!"

"That's not true!"

"Oh yeah!" Keith whipped around and the blanket dropped off his shoulders and to the floor. His eyes (*his purple eyes*) narrowed on Hunk while his lips curled. "Then why do you guys

hide from me? Why do you guys always tense when I act more Galran than human? Why does Lance *always* watch me when he thinks I'm not looking? Why does Pidge keep Matt and their father from being in the same room as me? Why does Shiro always have his arm ready to use *against me*? Why do you guys *always* stay *away* from me?!" Hunk was startled when tears began to build in Keith's eyes by the end of his speech and spilling down his cheek.

He froze, unsure of what the right response should be while Keith breathed heavily, tears dripping down his chin. A bitter laugh escaped through Keith's lips while he attempted to wipe the tears away. Hunk's heart was beating in painful realization.

Keith didn't want to be alone.

He surprised not only himself, but also Keith, when he pulled Keith down against his chest and into a deep hug. Keith softly yelped at being pulled into Hunk's arms, only squirming for a moment out of surprise. Ever so slowly he wrapped his own arms around Hunk's back and buried his face into Hunk's shirt.

Normally he would be embarrassed by how loud he was crying into Hunk's shirt but for the first time in a few weeks, someone had come to *him* to comfort him. Someone was giving Keith the one type of human interaction that Keith had been craving since falling asleep together in a dogpile a few weeks ago. All he craved was affection. Any type of affection from his teammates.

"Hey there, it's okay. I'm sorry we made you feel left out." Hunk whispered, feeling his own voice thick with tears as Keith sniffled into his shirt. "No one wants to make you feel like the bad guy. We all just thought you wanted some space. Seriously, if you wanted us to hug you all you had to do was ask. No one is afraid of you, Keith. We're just afraid of *hurting* you. I'm sorry you've been dealing with this all by yourself." Keith only choked back a sob and buried deeper into Hunk's shirt, causing the other boy to laugh tearfully.

"Hey, if you ever just need a hug, just do it man. No one is going to mind." Hunk whispered when Keith's tears began to subside. Keith nodded like a small child and kept his face pressed against Hunk. "You don't even have to ask any of us. And you and me? We can have a weekly cuddle session, okay?" Again Keith timidly nodded and Hunk smiled. "Now, do you wanna help me shred Lance's pajamas for stealing and hiding those casseroles."

The smile Keith gave Hunk was more than enough to tell him that everything would be alright.

Eventually.

x.x.V.x.x

It was Keith that burst into laughter first when Lance came storming in the kitchen, the next morning. His entire pajama set was shredded from front to back, with gaping holes all over. Keith snickered at the sight of the small puppy boxers, poking through several holes in Lance's pants.

"You goddamn fuzzball! I know it was you who did this!" Lance snarled, pointing a finger straight for the laughing Keith. "This is my *only* pair and you ruined them!"

At first the others were hesitant when Lance came storming in ready to chew Keith out. However, upon hearing Keith's laughter (*it had been so, so long*) the others had to admit that the whole situation was pretty funny. Soon enough everyone else was laughing alongside Keith at Lance's expanse.

Lance shrieked furiously and chased after a still laughing Keith who easily dodged away from Lance, thanks to his new body and skills.

“I’m going to murder you! I’m going to tear you apart and feed you to your own lion!
Hold still you goddamn cat!”

x.x.V.x.x

Sometimes Keith heard *their* voices. Inside his head.

You’re going to kill them.

Your thirst for blood will never go away.

They know what you’ve done. They’ve seen what you’re capable of and they’ll kill you.

Usually Keith heard their voices when he was alone and a blinding headache would follow. Thankfully, none of the other paladins noticed and Keith kept quiet.

He would go to them if the voices continued, and Keith was terrified that they would.

How does it feel to be their murderer?

x.x.V.x.x

“What – What are you saying?” Keith swallowed thickly, feeling as if a ton had been dropped onto his chest and all the air had whooshed out of him. He was seated on an exam table, after several prisoners had also been examined before him, with Allura, Coran and his friends surrounding him. Allura’s expression was grim while Pidge refused to look his way.

“The scans do not lie Keith. Your DNA is the same basic structure.” Allura said softly, afraid that if she spoke too quickly Keith would panic. “You always had some Galra DNA in you.”

“Are you saying that one of my parents was a *Galra*?! And the other a human?” Keith hissed, unable to hide the worry and fear from his voice. Beside him, Shiro placed a comforting hand on Keith’s shoulder with a grim smile. Lance was pacing beside Hunk.

“No.” Pidge finally spoke up, eyes filled with pain and hurt for their friend. Keith was shocked to see tears beginning to pool in them and he instantly felt guilty for yelling. *This wasn’t their fault.*

“Your parents weren’t human at all. They were Galran and *Altean*.” They whispered and Keith’s eyes widened. He snapped his head up so fast that even Shiro could hear the cracks in his neck. All eyes narrowed in on Allura, who squirmed uncomfortably.

“W – What?” Keith felt as if he couldn’t breathe let alone speak. If it wasn’t for Shiro’s hand moving to his back, he probably would have panicked.

“I thought you two were the last Alteans alive?” Shiro decided to interfere when he noticed Keith unable to speak up. Allura hugged her arms while Coran’s entire posture sunk.

“So did we.” Coran sighed.

“When Keith’s DNA would not measure up to any of yours, Pidge and I were thinking that he might not have been *human*.” Allura explained, wincing when Keith whined heartbreakingly. “The only other DNA samples we had access to were Coran and mine. Altean

DNA. We thought it wouldn't work but it couldn't help to try just to see the differences in our DNA. Besides the other DNA in Keith was such a little amount, after Zarkon tried to eliminate it, that we weren't sure it we'd ever actually be able to correctly match it. Pidge came to me, yelling that Keith's DNA was a *match*." Allura shuddered and rubbed her arms. "Not to Coran and myself. We aren't related to Keith in any way what's so ever, but his DNA matched Altean."

"T – That's not possible! I – I've always lived on Earth!" Keith choked, pupils blown wide. "I – I lived with S – Shiro! I was six!" Shiro nodded, remembering how young Keith had been when he was sent to live with them. Despite being a kid himself, Shiro remembered overhearing his mother and father talking about Keith's parents. About how they died in some sort of an accident.

"That could mean that your parents decided to reside on Earth before or after your birth." Allura rubbed her temples tiredly before looking up at Keith. Keith's eyes zeroed on the little marks under her eyes and her pointed ears. "Keith, can you remember *anything* about your parents or where you came from before Shiro?"

Keith's brain was running as such a speed, that couldn't be healthy, but even so he wracked his brain for something. Anything to explain this situation. "N – No. I don't remember anything before being put in the Shirogane's home." He saw Allura's face fall for a second before it was schooled into a soft smile.

"That's okay." She simply said. It took Keith a moment to realize that Allura was most likely *desperate* to found out about Keith's parents, if one was Altean. This must be just as much as shock for her as it was for Keith, to realize that her race might now have been entirely eradicated by Zarkon after 10,000 years. A small part of Keith's heart panged in guilt.

"Allura, I'm sorry I –" Keith didn't even have a chance to respond before his vision began to fade and the sounds around him were dimming. He felt his body sway but he was unable to move without feeling sluggish. The last thing he was were the worried faces of Allura and the others before falling unconscious.

x.x.V.x.x

You know the only way to stop us. You know what you have to do.

Kill them.

Kill us.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith recognized the house that he was in. It was the shack in the desert but this time it felt like a *home*. There was more life in it, in this memory than the last time Keith had set foot in that house. It felt warm.

He felt loved.

At the moment, Keith was being held tightly in something soft and fuzzy, that constantly tickled against his cheek. He could feel smaller versions of his ears twitching against the fuzziness and his face scrunched up in annoyance. His body began to shift, as he was moved around in the arms of someone and Keith wiggled his body.

The figure laughed, and the laugh traveled through their body causing Keith to snuffle at the unexpected movement. However, he instantly felt his body relax at the familiar warmth and

sense of safety this person gave him. He peered up with big, bright eyes and came face to face with warm purple eyes. It was a feminine face looking down at him, with two green markings (*why were they familiar?*) on her cheeks, and wearing a smile that could put the sun to shame. Her pale skin made her lips and eyes stand out all the more and immediately, Keith caught sight of pointed ears on her when she pushed back *black* hair.

“Hello, sunshine. I see that you’ve awoken.” The woman smiled, giving Keith a small bounce and bringing him closer to her face. Keith squealed happily, reaching out with *tiny* spotted hands to grab at her ears. **“Oh no, no Keith! You mustn’t grab at Mama’s ears, you naughty boy.”** The woman only laughed before grabbing one of Keith’s spotted hands and giving it a kiss. Keith felt himself smile at the action.

Growing bored, Keith’s eyes began to roam around the house. It was still verily empty with only a few select pieces of furniture in it. But what lacked in furniture, made up in *memories*. Along the bare walls were dozens and dozens of photographs tapped or hung, each showing three important people to Keith’s life.

His parents and himself.

Keith blinked owlishly when he was momentarily blinded by a bright flash and immediately Keith squirmed in displeasure. The woman above him (*now he knew her as his mother*) snorted with a roll of her eyes and she looked over Keith.

“Darling, that’s enough pictures. I’m sure we have enough of Keith.” She laughed when another figure came to sit beside her and Keith recognized him as his father. *A Galra*. The man’s yellow eyes were much kinder and softer than Keith imagined and even looking straight into them, he wasn’t frightened at all. His purple hair and ears stood up against his face with small flecks of grey in them.

“These humans are quite resourceful for their primitive materials. I’ve never seen such a device like these cameras before.” Keith’s father replied excitedly while putting the camera down. His wife smiled in adoration at his excitement. **“They’re not nearly as advanced as our races but they do well with the resources this dreaded planet has to offer.”**

“Oh stop that. Earth is a lovely planet.” Keith’s mother hushed her husband, giving Keith a bounce when he whined. Upon seeing the loving expression in her husband’s eyes she was quick to deposit Keith into his father’s arms. His father instantly snatched up the boy, raising him high above them, causing Keith to squeal in excitement. He enjoyed being this high up. **“Be careful with him, dear.”**

“Do you hear that sunshine? Your Mama doesn’t trust me with you.” Keith’s father grinned, revealing sharp teeth. Rather than being frightened like most people, Keith clapped his hands happily and reached for his father’s face. His father winced but kept smiling like a good sport, when Keith grabbed fistfuls of his hair. **“Someone’s got a strong grip. No doubt you’ll be an excellent swordsman with that grip.”**

“Or a pilot like his mother.”

“Or both.” Keith father grinned and settled Keith so that he could see his mother and father at the same time. The two enjoyed the quiet atmosphere, mostly filled with soft noises coming from Keith. Eventually, Keith’s mother rest her head on her husband’s shoulder.

“Did we do the right thing? Leaving the others behind and running?” Keith’s father sighed at his wife’s question and Keith frowned at the saddened looks on their faces. He wearily used his free hand to grab Keith’s mother by her shoulders and pull her close to him and their son.

“We had to. In order to keep Keith safe.” Keith’s father whispered while Keith continued to pat their faces. **“If we had stayed behind to fight, they would have killed you and Keith before his birth. Or worse, they would have used Keith as an experiment to breed our species. He would have eventually been killed for his size.”**

Keith’s mother’s throat tightened. **“Is he really small?”**

“For Galran standards, yes.” His father sighed. **“Even smaller than runts for our kind. He certainly would have been killed on our home planet and I have no doubt Zarkon wouldn’t hesitate if he found out about his parents.”** His father held his wife close when he hands gently ran across Keith’s cheeks. It was hard for both of them to admit that Keith would have more than likely been killed simply for being the product of love and his size.

“Well, I think he’s perfect.” His mother stated firmly before taking Keith and pressing him against her chest. Keith found himself snuggling into the warmth of his mother, beginning to feel sleepy.

“Of course dear. Our little sunshine is perfect. Besides, we’ll be safe on Earth. Zarkon doesn’t even know this planet exists and we far enough away that we’ll be safe.” His father said when Keith felt himself being lulled to sleep by the sound of his mother’s heartbeat.

“Goodnight sunshine.”

Just before Keith was pulled into a deep sleep, his eyes caught sight of a picture of his parents. They were standing side by side, his mother holding her rounded stomach while his father beamed with pride.

Keith’s mother had a helmet under her arm. A familiar red helmet.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith awoke to tears on his cheeks with the word, *Mama*, on his tongue. He looked up to see the others looking down at him worriedly, especially Allura and Keith almost cried again.

“I’m sorry Allura. My mother. I don’t know. I don’t know.”

“It’s okay Keith.”

x.x.V.x.x

“How has...Keith been?” Commander Holt asked, as he, Matt, Shiro and Pidge were seated together at the table to eat. Keith was watching Lance and Hunk, as the two attempted to spare with their hands. However, both looked like they were dancing more so than fighting. Allura and Coran were both currently preparing small ships for the prisoners to return home and Pidge was more than relieved that the other prisoners would be leaving their ship. They hadn’t realized how little privacy they had until they were constantly running into a prisoner or prisoners were constantly avoiding Keith like the plague.

“Better. Much better. He still gets startled and it takes a while to coax him out of his hiding spot but since we’ve been seeking him out first he’s gotten better.” Pidge replied with a

small smile. Matt couldn't help but grin at the look on his sibling's face, noticing how happy they were. *Looks like Pidge found that team you were telling them about.*

"That's good." Matt said and continued to help Pidge assemble parts into the Green Lion. He and his father had been more than shocked upon seeing all *five* of the lions in person. They'd been able to see each lion in action during their stay on Allura's ship, but had yet to have the chance to see *Voltron* formed. Matt was a little more than just excited to see this legendary defender of the universe.

"Yeah he's getting a lot better at getting used to his new form." Shiro added with a soft look in his eyes. "Just the other day he was back to arguing with Lance and taunting him with his new height, by dangling Lance's bayard in the air." Pidge and Shiro laughed at the memory while Matt and Commander Holt shared a strained smile.

Keith arguing did not exactly sound like a good thing.

"I'm still trying to coax him back into sparing but he still refuses." Shiro sighed, shoulders slumping. "He's like how I was when I returned from the Galra ship. He's afraid of what he's capable of and won't fight any of us. I just need to show him that it's okay and to get him to start training again."

"Maybe you can just attach some of Hunk's cooking to a dummy and get him to fight that way." Pidge shrugged. "He'd be on that dummy in a heartbeat." Shiro shook his head with a chuckle while Pidge smirked. Matt cocked his head in confusion at his teammate and sibling.

"Apparently Keith has found a whole new liking to Hunk's cooking." Pidge explained with a grin. Matt's eyebrows rose in surprise and his ears heated in embarrassment. It never occurred to him that Keith probably actually didn't eat the blood and flesh of his victims. "He liked Hunk's food before, but I guess with his enhanced senses and body, Hunk's food has suddenly become *amazing*." Pidge said with a roll of their eyes.

"I bet that makes Hunk happy." Matt commented and Pidge snickered.

"Delighted. But I gotta thank Keith. Hunk's trying even more than before to make amazing food with the resources we have and space goo." Pidge said while Shiro nodded in agreement.

"How's the research going on reversing the Galra DNA in Keith?" Commander Holt softly asked. He noticed the rigid posture that overcame both Shiro and Pidge and pretended to ignore the look the two shared.

"Er, not so great." Pidge finally responded. "We're not sure how to even start or begin. Or even if there's a way to reverse the effects so that Keith is human once again."

Commander Holt frowned at the answer. "Pity. Well, if there's anything Matt and I can do to help let us know. I'm sure Keith wants nothing more than to return to his old self." Shiro felt a frown beginning to worm its way on his lips.

"If, for some reason, this form is permanent for Keith we're going to have to *also* get used to this Galra form. For Keith's sake." Shiro interjected, earning a timid nod from Matt and his father.

"Of course. But hopefully it won't come to that."

"But it might." Pidge added softly, eyes locked onto where they were working on the

Green Lion. Matt looked over at his sibling, noticing the tired and saddened look in their eyes. Their eyes that were usually so bright. “Keith might remain like this forever and that doesn’t make him any less a part of this team. Of this family.” Matt couldn’t help but smile at Pidge’s words as a swell or pride burst in him. *Pidge was growing up into a fine young pilot of this team.*

“Yes. But Keith has got to be terrified as he is, after being *human* for his entire life. Besides he might be more dangerous now.”

“Dad, Keith isn’t dangerous. He’s perfectly fine.” Pidge interrupted before their father could go any further, causing their father to turn his attention to them. He sighed wearily.

“Katie,” At the glare Pidge sent him, Commander Holt backtracked. “*Pidge*. I’m not saying that Keith is a dangerous criminal. But in a body – the body of our enemy, no less – that he’s unfamiliar with he *can* be a danger. I couldn’t bear to see you hurt. Or him. He’s a child, isn’t he?” Commander Holt then turned to Shiro who looked away with guilt.

“Keith will be okay. As long as we’re by his side.” Pidge stated firmly, hands clenched tightly around their tools. Their grip loosened when Commander Holt gently stroked their cheek, with a pained and soft look.

“What if he becomes a danger to all of us? Yourself included?”

Shiro’s eyes hardened. “He isn’t. But if he ever became unreachable and dangerous... we’d kill him. Just as he would if that were one of us.” Commander Holt turned to look at Shiro with tired and sad eyes.

“Could you really?”

The silence that echoed in the room was more than enough as an answer.

x.x.V.x.x

The voices were getting louder and the pain was becoming too much.

Keith squeezed his eyes shut.

You’ll cause their death.

You’ll kill them all without hesitation.

This is what you were made for.

Voltron’s greatest weakness.

You will be their downfall.

There’s only one way for this to end.

Keith was locked in the bathroom as he had been for two days. He knew the others were worried by how many times they tried to ram the door down.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith almost turned around when he noticed Allura sitting by herself beside the large window. He faltered in his steps, ready to turn around. Only to have her turn towards him with a gentle smile. Carefully, she beckoned him over and before Keith knew it, he was sitting down

beside her.

You'll kill the princess first.

"My father always took me to see the stars on Altea." Allura murmured after a moment of quiet. Keith flinched at the sound of her voice but forced himself to remain calm. She chose to ignore the flinch and proceeded to smile at him before looking out the window. Keith followed her gaze and began to stare at the stars, planets and vastness that was space. "It was something he and I always did together at night, against my mother's wishes. She thought I was asleep but really my father was sneaking me out to see constellations."

Keith remained quiet as she spoke. He didn't necessarily feel the need to speak, but before he knew it his mouth was opening.

"My parents took me too." Keith blurted out and Allura watched with an amused grin. "At least I think. I'm starting to get fuzzy memories of them. We did live on Earth. We were running from something, or *someone*." Keith noticed the look Allura was giving him wasn't one of pity (which Keith despised) but rather a look from someone that understand how he felt. "But on Earth my parents, I think, used to get me to sleep but babbling about the constellations around Earth."

"That must have been quite new for them. The constellations and stars around Earth are very different from where Alteans and Galrans came from." Allura laughed softly and Keith could feel his muscles loosening as his headache numbed.

"Really?"

"Yeah. Altea and the planet of the Galra were very close to each other, in the same solar system. Practically neighbors really. We shared many similar constellations, stars, moons and even seasons." Allura's eyes became far away with a look that meant she was deep in thought. Slowly, Keith found himself growing curious. From the corner of her eyes, Allura noticed Keith's expression and grinned.

"Did you know that Galran and Altean once lived peacefully together? Even co-mingling on planets?" Keith's eye nearly bugged out of his head and his mouth dropped open.

"What?!"

"Yeah. It was a long, long time ago. Closer to when I was a child than as an adult. Galran and Altean were alike and lived together in a time of peace before Zarkon's empire emerged." Allura began to explain while Keith listened in rapt attention. "Several of my neighbors, growing up, were of Galran heritage. They lived with us on Altea and helped to keep our worlds safe by providing their soldiers. In return, we gave them food and knowledge to grow. It was peaceful and kind.

"Did you have any friends? Galran friends?" Keith asked quietly.

Allura's smile widened. "Yes, though they were all my father's friends. Growing up there were very little Galra children, at least on Altea. Apparently it's quite difficult and very special for a Galra couple to have a child." Allura explained while Keith's eyes widened. "A friend of my father, who was a Galran, told me it takes a very special bond for a couple to have a child. One of pure love and devotion." Keith looked away from Allura when he noticed the saddened look on her face and his stomach churned.

Something changed. She hates your kind now.

“Were there...were there any children like me?” Keith asked.

Allura frowned. “None that I was aware of. When two species intermingled like that, the bond had to be even greater and even *stronger* to have a child.” Allura continued to explain and Keith’s gaze drooped lower. “Your parents must have loved each other very much. To have had you, a child of an Altean and Galran, they must have had a special bond. I’m sure that meant they loved you very much.”

Keith could feel a stinging behind his eyes.

But they abandoned you. Just as everyone else will.

“Then why did they leave me?”

“Keith, I have no doubt that your mother and father probably would have *died* before abandoning you.” Allura whispered and placed her hands on Keith’s shoulders. She forced his chin up when he refused to look at her and felt her heart crack at the pain swimming in his eyes. “Your parents must have loved you *dearly* if they thought that leaving you on Earth would be your best protection. Please don’t doubt your parents love for you. For an Altean and a Galran to have a baby together, their love is one of the strongest bond in our entire galaxy and *nothing* could tear it apart. The only stronger bond than that, is their bond with their child.” Allura smiled softly when Keith swallowed. “Back on Altea we certainly would have rejoiced your birth had you been born between our species 10,000 years. Before Zarkon.”

Keith felt a chuckle bubble in his throat. “Why?”

“Life is a precious gift on Altean. And your birth would have signified the love and union between our two species and certainly would have opened gateways. There would have been a grand celebration for your mother and father, with you as the main guest of the event.” Allura laughed and Keith couldn’t help but smile at her. “Goodness, you would have been a gift of our Goddesses and rejoiced by everyone. Altean and Galran all would have come for a grand feast and night of dancing and I’m sure everyone would have wanted a chance to hold you. I’m sure your parents would have been swatting away Altea guards and Galra women by the end of the night.”

“Something tells me, my parents and I wouldn’t have like that too much.” Keith smiled.

“No, I suppose it’s not for everyone.” Allura responded, feeling lighter and happier than she had in many months since awakening on Ares.

“When Zarkon emerged with his empire, everything changed. The Galra were removed from Altea and Altean were sent back home. Many relationships were broken, disbanded and forbidden and soon the Galra empire became our enemy. Peace was gone and I grew up into war, hating Zarkon and his kind.” Allura’s eyes grew darker with every word said and Keith shifted nervously in his seat. “That peace between Galra and Altea was extinguished 10,000 years ago completely.”

“Well, it couldn’t have gone completely. My parents were together.” Keith licked his lips.

She hates your kind. She will always hate you.

“Your parents were two people in lifetimes of war and hate. A chance.”

She will never forgive you for what you’ve done to her people. She will kill you.

Keith felt his hands ball up into fists and his legs shook, as the anger bubbled in him. Allura watched him carefully as Keith clenched his jaw shut, unsure of what was going through his mind. Carefully, she reached out to touch his shoulder, only to have Keith violently rip away from her. Her heart jumped into her throat when she saw a pair of *yellow eyes* staring at her.

She hates you like they all do. You have to kill them all before they kill you.

“Keith?”

“Shut up! Shut up! *Shut up!*” Keith snarled, eyes blazing as he gripped his hair. Allura jumped in surprise, instantly on her feet when Keith crouched. He clutched his head between clawed hands and her throat tightened.

“Keith, what’s happening? Should I get Shiro and the others?” She tried once more as Keith began to growl.

She’s calling them to kill you. Kill her.

Kill her.

Kill her!

“Stop it! Shut up! Shut up!” Keith roared, slamming a fist into the wall. Allura backed up when she saw the hole in the wall where Keith had hit. Now more than ever, did she wish that she had some sort of comm or communicator device on her to alert the others. Right now, she was all alone.

Her eyes widened when Keith lunged in her direction and she only had a second to turn away from Keith.

Keith crouched low, eyes blazing and teeth bared. He knew that what he was doing was irrational, but ever since hearing *her* voice in his head, Keith’s mind was slowly losing the ability to think and comprehend. A dark cloud was covering his thoughts and his mind.

Kill her.

Kill her.

Kill her!

“Keith, stop this? You don’t want to do this? You’re our friend, our Red Paladin. Remember?” Allura barely dodged another attack for her throat and she bolted away from Keith but kept facing him. Keith made no indication that he heard her and charged once more. As Allura kicked her foot out, hitting Keith right in the gut, she could hear the breath being knocked out of Keith and mentally apologized.

“Keith please stop this! This isn’t you!” Allura pleaded when Keith attacked once more.

Kill her!

Kill her!

KILL HER!

Allura avoided an attack to her side, but Keith was much too quick this time. As she avoided one hand reaching for her side, she didn’t see the other hand swiping down right in front of

her until it was too late.

Allura cried out, falling backwards as pain exploded through her arm and chest. She cradled her now bleeding arm to her chest, where Keith had slashed through her armor. Her eyes widened in sudden terror when Keith stood over her, hand dripping with her blood. She opened her mouth to scream once more.

“Keith!”

Keith and Allura were both stunned by Shiro’s yell and they turned to see Shiro, Coran, Lance, Hunk, Pidge, Matt and Commander Holt suddenly in the room with them. They were all staring between the wounded Allura and the vicious Keith, with Matt and Commander Holt each holding a blaster with shaky hands. Shiro’s eyes widened when he saw the blood around Allura coming from Keith’s hand. *No, please no.* Lance felt tears pricking against at the sight of his friend standing tall over Allura and Pidge choked back a cry. Even Hunk look away from Keith while Coran’s eyes were firmly locked on Allura.

“How could you do this to her?! *She was your friend!*” Coran cried and Keith felt as if the fog had finally been lifted. His knees almost buckled when his thoughts rushed back to him and no longer was the bloodthirsty desire to kill running through him. His eyes were full of confusion upon seeing Shiro and the others all holding their own weapons.

He moved to asked what had happened but stopped short when he saw the blood dripping from his hand. Keith’s entire body turned to ice when he heard Allura breathing heavily behind him. Ever so slowly, Keith turned to face the princess and his heart shattered.

Allura knelt cradling her bloody arm, eyes full of terror when Keith looked down at her.

The hand at Keith’s side, covered in blood, trembled.

He could feel the terrified gazes from the rest of their team as they kept their aim on him.

So, Keith did the only thing he knew how, during these past months.

Keith ran.

This will never end unless someone dies.

x.x.V.x.x

They say it takes a storm to make a rainbow, but I’m a tornado set to destroy.

Chapter End Notes

So, a bit of fluff there with some angst at the end. Like I would really let you guys catch your breath. Psh, who do you think I am? Angst all the way is what I say. Ah, my poor son. He needs a long holiday. Don't worry, he's just gonna go on vacation to a nice, quiet planet with a beach where he can research memes and dad jokes. Don't worry too much about Keith xD.

Ahh, only two more chapters left. What could happen? What will happen? Guess you

guys have to keep tuning in to find out. I'm hoping to finish beforehand, but classes start next Monday and the last two updates maaaaaaay take a teeny bit of time. We'll see. As always, I love all the comments I get and it helps with motivations. If you have anything on your mind, don't hesitate to leave a comment. They are wonderful and so lovely to read. Hopefully this chapter was worth it all, as we are coming to a close with this particular fic. Thanks for the support and checking out my one-shot. Come find me on tumblr @lordofthebigtimesupernatural and let's cry about Voltron angst! Thanks and peaceout!

I'm Bigger than My Body

Chapter Notes

Hi guys, so I would apologize for the time frame it took to come up with this chapter but I just, I don't know guys. All I can say is Life. Yep. That's about it. I don't even want to get any further. But thank you to everyone who patiently waited (or impatiently, I get that) for this chapter. I'm hoping the content of this chapter makes up for the wait of the update. I got really excited writing it and was ready to keep going but I had to stop it, so I could still have a final chapter left. But guuuuuyyyyyssss, do you even understand how much I can still get in with a little under 20K words left in this story. Let me tell you: A LOT. Boo-to the-ya. So hopefully this chapter is good! Please keep up all the comments and kudos and support because they make me so happy and I'm so amazed every time I get them! Thank you guys so much for the continuous support of this story, it's unbelievable!

And some of you have found me on tumblr!!!! Ahh, I got so happy talking to some of you and following you! Some wonderful people here! Come find me on twitter and we can talk on anon or not and you can sell me your souls for a happy ending :')

@lordofthebigtimesupernatural!

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I've been wandering for too long.

Unsure of where I belong, or where I can go.

x.x.V.x.x

“Isn’t he kind of..ugly?”

Keith smothered his giggles with his hands when his mother slapped her husband along the arm. Immediately his father whimpered and rubbed the abused appendage while Keith continued to stare up at his parents. His father’s purple skin and fluffed head stood out in stark contrast against his mother pale skin and pointy ears.

“He is not ugly and you better start to learn Earth’s language.” Keith’s mother scoffed and gently smoothed out the wrinkles in the new clothing that Keith was wearing. They were...*itchier* than his old clothes and nowhere near as soft. But they also weren’t quite as stiff so Keith supposed he could live with this.

“Which one?!” Keith’s father moaned, causing Keith to snicker once more. **“There’s a whole galaxy’s worth of languages on this planet.”** He dramatically flopped onto the bumpy couch behind him, allowing Keith easier access, to move away from his mother and climb onto his father’s lap.

He’d been stunned when he looked into a mirror, only to see an unfamiliar boy staring back at him. Instantly, Keith had been frightened and tried to warn his parents of the intruder in their house. They’d panicked for a split second, but were more than surprised to see that instead of their pale, spotted purple son with ears as big as his head and dark fur, there was their son with pale

skin, rounded, *human* ears and no fangs. Throughout the day, Keith's body morphed back and forth between his original form and this new form.

Apparently, Keith had inherited his mother's ability to change forms, but to a more severe degree thanks to his Galran DNA. While his mother could change skin color, textures, hair color, height and length, she still could not change her eyes, shape of her ears or remove the Altean marks from her skin.

"I figured we could start with Korean." Keith's mother smiled brightly, already shifting into her own human form, in order to match her son. "According to those books we found, Keith looks to be of that decent so I believe we should make that our story. From there we can learn *all* other languages Earth has to offer. Isn't it incredible?! Back on our home planet, there was a sole language and that was it!"

"It's bound to confuse Keith." His father grumbled when Keith reached up to tug on his father's hair.

"Keith! Keith!" Keith repeated happily and his father sunk under the powerful glare sent his way. **"Er, I mean,** yes dear. It'll be fun." Keith stopped playing with his father's hair in order to cock his head for a moment. He looked at his father in confusion, making the older man laugh.

"Fun?"

"Yes, lots of funny, my little sunshine." His mother praised. Keith perked up at the mention of his nickname, one he easily recognized in any language. "Not he is not ugly. He's is perfect and will blend in well with these people now."

"And what about myself? I highly doubt they'd be welcoming to me." Keith father sighed, watching when his son turned his attention back to him and began to play happily. His father felt his mother lean down to rub his tense shoulders.

"I know. It'll be tough for a while, but for now I will find a job for us to blend in more, while you take care of Keith. Hopefully sometime soon, Earth will be welcoming to alien visitors." His mother sighed, pressing her lips to the side of Keith's father's head. Keith's father leaned into the touch while Keith wrinkled his nose. **"Having a child surely changes everything."**

"Never thought I'd see the day where I became a *stay-at-home* papa."

"Papa! Papa! Papa! Papa!" Keith happily clapped his hands in excitement, causing his parents to both laugh at him. He felt his mother caressing his cheek and his father ruffling his hair, as a jolt of warmth and electricity burst through Keith.

"Oh no." Keith's mother sighed with a chuckle, watching as her son instantly reverted back to his original form, with large, fluffy and purple ears. "Looks like we'll have to work on his transforming abilities, before we release him onto Earth."

"Earth is gaining a new little menace." Keith's father laughed and bounced his chirping son on his lap. Keith squealed in joy.

Keith's mother smiled warmly. "Yes. I suppose Earth has."

Running. Running. Running. Running.

All he's been doing is running.

Running and running and running.

What happens when there is nowhere else to run?

Keith's hand felt like it was burning as the blood – *Allura's blood* – continued to dry. His chest tightened painfully as if being squeezed by an invisible set of ropes. His eyes burned with unshed tears, and his vision only continued to blur as he blindly ran down hall after hall.

He couldn't believe that he'd attacked someone. That he had let himself be taken over by...by that *monster*. Now because of it, his friend (*his family*) had suffered the consequences. He knew he should have never been let free. He was stupid to think that he could have gone back to the way things were before.

He was a goddamn fool to put his friends in such danger.

Keith wanted nothing more than to curl into a ball and *cry*. To sob until his broken heart bled from him and there was nothing left. To wither away until there was nothing left of him; until the images of Allura's terrified eyes and Shiro's look of betrayal were washed from his memory.

Forever.

Keith wanted to open a trash shoot and let himself be through into the airless vacuums of space. He wanted to slice his *own bayard* through his chest. He wanted Lance to shoot him point blank with his laser gun. He wanted Hunk's hands to crush his windpipe and destroy his heart. He wanted Pidge to electrify him until he was nothing but ash. He wanted Allura to toss him repeatedly into the floor until he bled out. He wanted Shiro to strangle him. He wanted – he wanted – he wanted – *he wanted* –

He wanted to die.

Keith bit back a sob when his feet crumpled underneath him and he stumbled to the floor. His hands barely caught himself before his head hit the floor (*he should have let it*). There was a violent shiver running through his entire body, particularly the hand that was covered in blood. Keith felt tears racing down his cheeks, as his breathing picked up and his heart raced. Keith couldn't stop no matter what.

How could he attack his friends?

How could he hurt Allura?

Keith's fingers curled along the floor, digging scratch marks into the floor. His back arched when his chest felt like it was caving in with pain. Keith couldn't breathe.

He couldn't breathe.

He couldn't breathe.

He couldn't breathe.

You know what has to be done.

Keith's entire body turned rigid at the voice in his head. His arms and hands were drawn to wrap

around himself in comfort. These voices were the roots of his problem. It was the fault of these voices, not his own that he attacked Allura. It was the voice's fault. Not his. Keith would never hurt his friends, but these voices made him. It was their fault. It was Zarkon's fault. *It was Haggar's fault.*

Not his.

Keith felt a howl rip through him in absolute fury and agony, not caring if everyone on the ship could hear him. His thoughts were whirling in his mind and his body was trembling with fear and adrenaline.

It wasn't his fault.

It wasn't his fault.

It wasn't his fault!

Despite the new anger that he felt and the blood rushing through his veins, Keith couldn't stop the tears from falling or end the pain in his chest. Over and over he kept repeating that the blame was all on Haggar (*but over and over Keith felt like he was lying*). He choked back another sob, feeling his claws beginning to dig painfully into his arms.

It wasn't his fault.

It was.

It wasn't his fault.

It was.

It wasn't his fault.

It was all his fault.

"Keith?"

Keith wanted to curl in further into himself at that moment. He wanted to bury himself where he could never be found. He didn't want to be found. Not like this. Not unless it was to end him like he desperately wanted.

"Keith?" Shiro asked once more from somewhere behind him. Keith remained motionless, curling tighter in on himself, as if he could disappear if he tried hard enough. His claws continued to dig painfully in both of his arms, but Keith couldn't care less right then and there. Any other pain was better than the pain that was in his chest. It was unbearable.

"Keith? Are you alright?" Keith almost wanted to laugh at Shiro's question; at the hesitation in Shiro's voice. Hesitation meant fear and fear meant that Shiro *was afraid* of him. Shiro.

Of course he was afraid. How couldn't he? After all, it was monsters like Keith that took away a year of Shiro's life. It was monsters like him that *destroyed* Shiro's dreams of space.

"Go away." Keith managed to croak, unable to look up from where he was staring at the floor. He could hear hesitant steps from behind him, but still Keith never moved from his spot. There was a soft, familiar humming noise echoing in the silence of the room, coming from Shiro's arm. Keith had no doubt that Shiro's arm was armed and glowing.

“Keith, Allura’s okay. She’s just startled.” Keith actually did snort this time, causing Shiro to swallow. *I believe I did more than “startle” the princess.* “Coran’s fixing up her wound now. It’s simply a flesh wound on her arm and chest. Apparently it looked worse than it was.”

Keith remained silent.

Shiro’s heart was beating rapidly and his lips were dry. His mind was already in overdrive, screaming for Shiro to get away from Keith – *no from the enemy*. Shiro could feel the beginning tingling of panic residing in the deep throes of his mind and his entire body was rigid with fear. He couldn’t help but hesitate every time that Keith shifted or moved. He was more than a bit ashamed to admit that Shiro continued to see the enemy rather than Keith.

“Keith, it’s okay. No one’s going to hurt you.”

“*Liar.*”

Shiro’s entire body turned to ice and subconsciously his arm rose.

“Keith?”

“You’re a *liar*.” Keith whispered so quietly that Shiro almost missed it. Keith’s eyes were still covered by his hair and his arms were tightly wrapped around his body, but Keith’s ears were raised tall and straight. Tense with anticipation.

“Keith no one is going to hurt you.”

“Just like how I wasn’t going to hurt anyone?” Keith laughed bitterly. He choked for a second at the end and Shiro felt his heart skip a beat at the broken sound. *How could Keith keep all this pain to himself?* “Then how come your arm is glowing? How come you can’t get within two feet of me now? How come Lance had his blaster ready and *aimed* at me? How come Commander Holt and Matt were ready to attack without question?”

Shiro’s throat felt too dry to speak but it didn’t matter as Keith continued to speak.

“Face it Shiro. You’re afraid of me.” Keith hissed, tensing up even further. Shiro’s steps faltered. “You’re ready to kill me if I get out of hand.”

“Keith...”

“Don’t lie to me Shiro.” Keith snarled, finally turned around to look at Shiro. Shiro swallowed thickly when he came face to face with yellow eyes and bared teeth. Momentarily Shiro took a step back, causing Keith to snort. “If there’s one thing you can do for me, *don’t lie to me.*”

Shiro didn’t know what to say or do. Keith was difficult, that much he had learned when they were kids. One had to be patient and understanding with Keith and also firm, but Shiro had never witnessed a defeated Keith, such as right now, before.

“Our training simulation, that started this hellhole, was meant to do one thing, wasn’t it?” Keith’s eyes remained locked on Shiro, sending a shiver down Shiro’s spine, as Keith’s voice became devoid of any emotion. “It was to prepare of to strike no matter what came our way. You were able to defeat them and get past your weaknesses and that’s why you lead Voltron, Shiro. You *understand* the sacrifices that must be made to win a war.”

“Keith, let’s go back. There’s no need to start rambling like this.” Shiro could feel his paranoia and his worry beginning to bubble within his body. Keith merely blinked.

“I can’t go back. And you know it. That’s why you’re here, isn’t it?” Keith’s voice sounded dead to Shiro’s ears. While Shiro battled an inner turmoil, Keith was growing numb as he accepted his fate.

“Why am I here Keith?”

“To kill me.”

One could hear a pin drop with how quiet it was in the room with Keith and Shiro. Keith felt a small pang in his heart when a look of torment and horror came across Shiro’s face. He was tired of being the cause for those looks on Shiro. He was tired of causing so much pain to the person who had been his closest family. He was tired of hurting his entire family.

“No...Keith. You’ve got it wrong!”

Keith sighed tiredly. “I’m dangerous Shiro. You saw what I was capable of. I *attacked* Allura without hesitation. I was ready to *kill* her. You *know* I can’t stay around this team anymore, unless you want someone to die. I’m a danger to this team; to Voltron; to the Universe. Shiro, you must kill me.”

Keith.” Shiro croaked hoarsely. His glowing arm lowered as his legs trembled with sadness. “How could you even say that?”

“Because it’s true. You know it.” Keith pointed out, still kneeling in front of Shiro, showcasing his vulnerability. “What will you do *when* I attack someone next? What happens if I actually succeed and kill someone? Is it really worth keeping me alive?”

“I can’t just kill you like this! How is that any better than killing anyone else on this ship?” Shiro cried and panic crept into his voice.

“Because no one is a dangerous monster who can’t control their mindset.” Keith easily said much to Shiro’s heartache. “I can’t keep fighting this Shiro. I don’t *want* to keep fighting this.” Keith finally admitted and it felt like the final crack in Shiro’s armor. His façade dropped and his heart thundered painfully in his chest.

“Keith, how can you say that?”

“Shiro, this isn’t fair!” Keith cried, standing up and towering over Shiro. Despite his instincts screaming to get away, Shiro did not back away and locked eyes on his friend. He couldn’t give up on Keith, even if Keith was at that point. “I don’t *want* to live like this anymore! I’m tired of fighting, every day. I’m sick of hearing the voices in my head. I’m tired of relieving the torment on Zarkon’s ship and in the arena – for God’s sake I almost murdered Pidge’s family! I’m tired of battling to stay in control! I’m tired of living like a monster, with all of you scared to get close to me again! I don’t want to live like this anymore! Please, Shiro, make it stop! Make it all end!” By now Keith was begging with Shiro, while Shiro swallowed painfully.

How did I miss this?

“Takashi? Are you going to forget about me?”

“No little brother! Of course not, even if you go to a new home. I could never forget about my one and only Keith.”

“Keith – I – I can’t do that.”

“Yes you can! You were ready to! Just follow your instincts!” Keith continued to plead desperately and Shiro nervously stepped out of reach. “Don’t think about it! You know you have to do this, please! This is what I want Shiro, please!”

Shiro’s heart was hammering so hard in his chest that he thought it was surely going to burst out and onto the floor.

“Takashi, I don’t wanna go. I wanna stay with you, forever and ever. Until we reach the edge of the galaxy.”

“Don’t worry, you and I will fly in space together. There’s no one else I’d trust as my partner, Keith. We’ll keep in touch. I promise.”

“You won’t forget about me?”

“Of course not! How could I?”

“Keith...no.” Shiro saw the way Keith’s hands curled into fists and a snarl ripped across his face. His eyes narrowed in anger and his entire body tensed.

“How can you do this?! You’re being selfish!” Keith hissed darkly and for a split second all of Shiro’s nerves were gone and replaced with hot anger.

“I’m being selfish?” Shiro snorted. “You’re being selfish. You’re the one just giving up without a fight!”

“I’m tired of fighting! All I’ve been doing is fighting and I’m tired of it!” Keith snapped back. “You know what needs to be done so just *kill* me already! This is what’s best for everyone! For you, for Lance, for Allura! Everyone!”

Shiro’s heart was covered in ice and felt like it was going to crack and break any second now.

“What would you do if I became a bad guy, Shiro?”

“Well, that’ll never happen, Keith. Why are you asking?”

“What if I did though? Would you protect everyone? Me too?”

“Sure, I guess I’d do the right thing.”

“Kill me!” Keith snarled, stepping towards Shiro, who stepped back.

“No! I won’t do it Keith!” Shiro said.

“Stop it and kill me! You *have* to!”

“No! I won’t!”

Keith howled in frustration, swiping a clawed hand towards Shiro, who easily ducked out of the way. Keith lunged once more, snatching Shiro’s robotic arm in his hands and ignoring the way that Shiro shoved at him. Keith’s claws dug into the metal of Shiro’s arms while the two wrestled for freedom. Shiro spun and ripped his arm free of Keith, with a kick sent towards Keith’s gut. Keith grunted out of pain, momentarily falling to one knee before leaping at Shiro. Shiro had no time to think, let alone get free and found himself pinned to the floor under Keith.

Keith’s claws were penetrating the skin and metal of Shiro’s arms and Shiro was forced to look

into the furious, yellow eyes of Keith.

“Shiro, I’m going to miss you.”

“Me too Keith. Me too.”

Keith hissed harshly, moving his face until it was inches from Shiro. Keith so close that he could see every indentation and ridge of Shiro’s scar along his nose.

“If you won’t give me what I want, then I know *who* will.” Keith spat, raising one hand and forming a fist. Shiro’s entire vision turned dark upon impact and the last thing he heard before falling unconscious was a quiet but painful apology from Keith.

x.x.V.x.x

Keith’s hands felt numb despite the pain from attacking Allura and hurting Shiro. His heart was all but gone by now and his mind was working on autopilot. Before he realized it, Keith was inside of Red and seated down in the pilot’s seat. He barely could sense the worry that was being emitted from Red and he couldn’t hear Red’s soft calls to him. For a few seconds Keith stared at his control panel, unable to move and get to where he needed to be.

“Let’s go Red.” Keith barely realized that he was speaking out loud before taking control of the controls on Red. Red made a noise of protest but allowed their paladin to pilot them out of Allura’s ship. Keith chose to ignore the sounds coming from Red and tried to focus his entire attention on space surrounding them.

Rationally he knew he wasn’t thinking clearly at the moment. He was letting his emotions run wild and cloud his thoughts, but that meant nothing to him right now. When there was nothing left for him, Keith couldn’t bring himself to care much about whether his emotions were controlling his actions.

Without looking back, Keith swallowed and maneuvered Red through a wormhole.

You know what you have to do.

x.x.V.x.x

Pidge nervously paced back and forth in the common room, while their family watched from the side. Lance wasn’t faring too much better, but at least he was standing in one place, shifting from one foot to the other. Hunk was nervously fiddling with the headband ties around his head. Coran was already working with Allura to bandage her up and heal her wounds, with Matt and his father assisting in any way they could. Allura was grateful for their help and managed a weak smile at them, but she couldn’t help but continuously look towards the door entrance of the room, where Shiro had gone through.

It had almost been two hours since Keith’s...attack and since Keith and Shiro had both left the room.

Allura had been more than a little surprised when Keith’s claws had raked into her skin, after his fit of pain and anger, and admittedly she was fearful of his actions. She supposed she felt bad that she wasn’t as concerned for Keith’s wellbeing as she could have been, but understandably she had been more worried about not bleeding out.

Coran didn’t even spare Keith a second thought while he tended to his princess’ wounds.

Lance, Hunk and Pidge were all torn between concern for their friend Allura, and worry for their other friend, Keith. Of course, they were a bit shaken up after seeing such a violent and vicious attack from Keith (Lance was momentarily brought back to the first time he had seen Keith after his rescue). Hunk was frightened for his friends, Keith included.

But Shiro had been firm in making sure that the team took guard and protected Allura. He was to go after Keith and *no one* else.

However, that was two hours ago and everyone was getting more and more antsy with every passing tick. They didn't know whether Keith and Shiro were together. Or if Shiro had even found Keith yet. Or worse...

No one wanted to admit that.

"Do you think Keith is alright?" Pidge finally asked, momentarily stopping with their pacing. Lance and Hunk looked over at them with furrowed brows and licked their lips. Coran paid them no mind while Allura sighed tiredly. Matt and his father shared a soft look but chose to remain quiet.

"I'm sure Shiro's talking to him right now. You know Keith always calms down with Shiro." Hunk laughed nervously but Pidge didn't look convinced. Neither did Lance, nor anyone else for the matter.

"As if. Keith is so stubborn he wouldn't even listen to himself." Lance snorted with a roll of his eyes. Pidge wrung their hands together.

"Shouldn't you be asking if Shiro is okay?" Commander Holt finally sighed, looking away from Allura and Coran to face the remainder of team Voltron. Pidge's eyes immediately looked away when their father looked at them. Matt swallowed thickly, looking between his sibling and father.

"Shiro can handle himself." Lance waved the commander off with his hand and short attitude. Commander Holt almost smiled at the boy's antic, but the mood of the room was too cold for any smiles today.

"I believe, the Princess is also capable of handling herself, and look at what Keith did to her." Commander Holt pointed out, causing the others to wince. Pidge set their hands on their hips with a frown.

"It wasn't Keith's fault." Pidge argued quietly. Their father wearily looked at them, with eyes full of concern. It was so difficult to see his youngest child caught up in something so much more than just Space Rocks and Aliens. Thinking about Keith and what had happened to him, let alone what happened to Shiro, himself and Matt, was more than enough to make Commander Holt want to take his children far, far away. His heart ached at the pain and torment on his child's face.

"But it was. Maybe not intentionally, but that's the problem." Commander Holt gently explained. "Keith isn't in control and it's obvious he's losing more and more control with every day. Shiro could be in danger. We all could."

"Dad, Keith would *never* try to hurt us like that." Pidge snapped, ignoring the burn in their throat.

"Maybe not before. However, Keith is no longer the same. Keith *attacked* one of your own. How can you be sure he won't attack anyone else? Or Shiro?" Commander Holt asked and

Pidge remained quiet. Their eyebrows narrowed and they chewed on their lip between their teeth.

“Unfortunately, Commander Holt may be right.” Coran finally spoke up causing everyone to jerk in surprise. Lance and Hunk both looked at one another, worried and slightly upset.

“What?” Lance said.

“Keith *hurt* the princess. Without hesitation.” Coran admitted with a guilty look on his face. He finished up the wrappings on the base of Allura’s wounded arm.

“Coran, it’s not Keith’s fault! You know that.” Pidge interrupted quickly. Coran busied himself with putting away the supplies, while Matt elected to help rather than interfere.

“We know that Pidge.” Coran’s face didn’t hold the usual goofiness or glee that he often had, nor any of the silliness he was known for. Rather, his face was full of regret and sadness. An uncommon look for the Altean. “I wish more than anything that Keith was back to the way he was and that he did not have to go through this. But he’s getting worse. It’s only a matter of time before he tries...before he tries to kill someone. Not on purpose, but still.”

Lance’s heart sunk to the floor. Even Matt looked saddened by the thought.

“But we can’t – we can’t just give up on him!” Hunk cried, causing Allura to snifle.

However, before anyone could answer, the sound of an alarm rang through the common room, followed by a blue light. In less than a second after the alarm sounded, a disgruntled Shiro came bursting through the floor, clutching his head with one hand. Instantly, Hunk and Lance were at his side, trying to hold him upright and keep him from falling down.

“Shiro? What happened?!” Lance said, worry evident on his face. Allura and Coran looked at Shiro, worriedly before turning their attention towards back towards their screens and alarm.

“What’s happening? Are we under attack? Did Zarkon find us? How did he find us so quicky? I feel like we just got away from him. Oh man, I’m going to be sick.” Hunk moaned beside the dazed Shiro and Lance. Pidge smiled for a split second before glancing at her family.

“Keith...”

“What’s happened? Did Keith – did he attack you?” Pidge swallowed thickly at the thought. *If Keith attacked Shiro, like he did Allura, then all hope was lost.*

“This is quite alarming.” Allura gasped before Shiro had the chance to answer. Everyone, including Shiro, looked over to where she and Coran were standing and all noticed the grim expressions on both of their faces.

“Keith.” Shiro murmured when his eyes met the pain-laced expression on Allura’s face.

“This isn’t an alarm signify a Galra ship close by or even Zarkon.” Allura swallowed thickly. “But rather, it’s an alarm to tell us that someone has *left* the ship. I can no longer track the Red Lion’s coordinates.”

Rather than the moment of silence that Shiro had been expecting, the room immediately burst into noise and action.

“That *stupid*, idiot!” Lance snarled, shoving Shiro into Hunk’s arms in order to look over at the screen where Allura and Coran were at. Though, he couldn’t really read the language nor really understand what the screen signified, Allura’s words were enough to fuel a new fire inside him. He could just feel the stress pouring over the edge that he had been standing too close to and now it was all coming out at once. “What does he think he’s doing by running away like this?!”

Allura and the others were more than a bit startled when Lance slammed his fist against the nearest wall. They weren’t used to this angry side of Lance.

“And why shouldn’t he?” Pidge couldn’t help but snap. Instantly, Lance’s angry focus was on them. “After all, we’ve only been *ostracizing* him since we rescued him. Maybe he’d had enough.”

“So now it’s our fault that this *moron* decided to run away when Zarkon’s breathing down our neck?” Lance snorted and rolled his eyes. “He’s going to fall right back into Zarkon’s hands and then what are we going to do?”

“Get him back!”

“And if he keeps running away? He’s bound to get himself killed!”

“So you’re saying that we should just give up on him? After everything?!” Pidge’s jaw clenched tightly and their hands balled into fists. While Lance had an obvious height advantage on Pidge, Pidge had a temper that was known to be destructive when provoked. It certainly wouldn’t be a clean fight between the two if things got out of hand. Which, honestly, was what Hunk feared the most right now. Even Shiro was worried.

“Guys, stop. No one’s saying that we’re giving up on Keith and no one’s saying that he isn’t being quite so *intelligent* for running away.” Hunk tried to intervene while Shiro pushed himself to his feet. He wasn’t as steady as he would have liked but with every passing minute his strength was returning.

“Stay out of this Hunk!” Lance and Pidge both shouted at the same time, much to Hunk’s disappointment.

“Everyone, stow it!” Shiro commanded in a booming voice. The silence that rang through the room was more than just uncomfortable and Pidge and Lance were still staring each other down. However, Matt and his father were closer to Pidge’s side, should Lance try anything. “Look, right now is not the time to be fighting, and if that’s all you’re going to do then you’re going to be *useless* to this time. To Keith. We have bigger problems to worry about right now. Keith...Keith isn’t good.” Shiro shuddered when he remembered the dead look in Keith’s eyes and the way he begged for death. “Guys, you don’t understand what he was like.”

“What? Did he try to rip your heart out?” Commander Holt sighed.

“No.” Shiro snapped before stopping himself. It wasn’t the Commander’s Holt that they were in this position. It wasn’t anyone’s fault really.

Not even Keith’s.

“Keith...Keith wanted to *die*.” Shiro could hear all of the gasps from everyone in the room, and he couldn’t bear to read their expressions. Instead he focused on the window beside them. “He begged me to kill him. Pleaded that I *had* to kill him in order to protect the team. After everything that happened, he was more worried about this team – about Allura, than his own life.”

Keith's eyes and the pain laced in his voice would haunt Shiro for as long as he lived. They would serve as constant reminders for all that he had failed in.

"He – what? He wanted to? No! That – that can't be right!" Hunk gulped nervously, feeling his heartbeat picking up and his eyes burning. The thought of Keith *begging* to be killed made Hunk visibly sick to his stomach. For once, he wanted to throw up and it was not because of bad vertigo.

Unable to speak Shiro merely nodded.

"No. No, Keith wouldn't do that. He's too stubborn for that." Lance could feel horror creeping up inside him and all of his previous frustrations and anger were washing away quickly. Keith was honestly the *last* person that Lance would have thought to ask for such a request. Lance had his fair shares of sadness and depression over his life – especially with living in Keith's shadow at the Garrison and being away from home since finding the Blue Lion. But even then he'd never gone so far as to wish for death.

"He did. Over and over." Shiro said bitterly.

Allura felt a lump building in her throat, preventing her from speaking. The wounds on her arms and chest burned with new pain and she squeezed.

"Keith..." Was all Pidge could say out loud. Sensing his sibling's discomfort, Matt had already wrapped an arm around Pidge's shoulders and pulled them close. Their father gazed mournfully at his children, wishing that he could take on all their pain in that moment.

"He's hurt and I – I don't know what to do anymore..." Shiro finally admitted as his head hung and a small tear ran down the bridge of his nose before splattering on the floor. At his sides, his hands were trembling. Commander Holt reached out to place a comforting hand on Shiro's shoulder, only to have more tears fall from Shiro's face.

The boy was far too young to have such a weight put on his shoulders and this responsibility was taken a toll on him. He was still a boy himself, with so much of his life that he was meant to live and yet in this moment, Shiro looked older than Commander Holt.

"I don't know how to help him." Shiro's voice cracked with pain and the others couldn't bear to look at their leader so broken. He looked as everyone felt. It was a few tense moments before anyone spoke up, too lost in their own misery.

"He wouldn't want you to give up." It was Matt who shocked everyone. Lance, Hunk, Allura, Coran and even Pidge looked over at Matt with tear-filled and red-rimmed eyes. The expression on Matt's face was different and full of determination.

"Keith." Matt explained, eyes lingering on Shiro's broken form. "Keith is *afraid*. He thinks that he is nothing more than a monster that will hurt you. He's pushing you all away because he *thinks* that is safest for you and him. This is exactly what Keith thinks he wants: *For you all to give up and leave him.*" Matt explained, watching as Shiro's shoulders tensed and his whole body became rigid. "But what Keith wants – no what Keith *needs* is his family by his side. If you give up now, then you will never see Keith again."

"How?" Lance finally asked. There wasn't any anger in his voice or annoyance, but rather a broken defeat. His eyes were weary and more tired than ever, like a man who had lived through many wars in his life. "How can we help if he doesn't want us to find him?"

“By *saving* him.” Matt responded immediately. “You cannot keep trying to help him. You *have* to. Pidge didn’t try to find dad and I; no they were determined and they did. You need to stop trying and you need to help him. *We* have to accept who Keith is and stop trying to look for a cure.” Everyone winced at the harshness in Matt’s voice.

“I understand it is difficult to see Keith as a Galra. I, myself, am guilty of that too. I will never understand the bond that you all share and share with him, because it is something only you all can feel. But we must accept that Keith is a Galra, not a human anymore. He works differently; his body works differently. His senses are different; his emotions are different; his thoughts are different and the way he interacts with everyone is different. But that doesn’t mean it has to be bad.” Matt’s tone grew softer as he looked between each member of the Voltron team. It was obvious that each and every one of them were mourning the loss of Keith even after his attack on Allura.

“You need to save Keith, not just from Zarkon or Haggar but from himself. He’s scared.”

Lance turned away from Matt to look at Pidge, who instantly met his eyes. Silently, both apologized to one another with a firm nod and soon Lance and Pidge looked to Allura and Coran. Already, they wore determined expressions and smiled briefly at the others. Soon they turned to Hunk, who was crying, but also nodding at them. Finally, everyone looked at Shiro, whose head was still hanging with tear tracks on his face.

For a while, Shiro didn’t even move.

Until he took a deep, deep breath and slowly raised his head.

As he met the eyes of his teammates, he could see a familiar fire burning in all of them.

“Let’s bring our friend back. For good.”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith saw Zarkon’s ship before Red could even alert him of its presence. His mood had shifted from depression and self-hatred to nothing but cold-blooded fury and revenge since fleeing Allura’s castle. For the most part, Red had been quiet while flying with their paladin, but as Zarkon’s ship came closer and closer to them, they couldn’t help but express their concern.

“This has to end Red. Not just for me. But for everyone.” Keith growled, eyes locked onto the ship. He knew there was no way that Zarkon couldn’t know that he was arriving towards their ship. The lack of other ships and ammunition was one sign.

Before Red came too close into proximity of Zarkon’s ship, Keith maneuvered Red onto a particularly large asteroid. The Lion expressed its confusion when Keith stood up from his seat.

“You can’t come with me.” Keith whispered and ignored the roar in his head coming from Red. He turned from the control panel, running his fingers along the walls of Red one last time. *He was going to miss this.* “I have to do this alone, Red. I can’t risk Zarkon getting his hands on you.”

As Keith placed an old helmet on his head (one that fit his new Galra form), he swallowed the lump in his throat. From his memories of his past, Red was more to him than he could have ever realized. Connecting to him in more ways than he imagined and that made leaving Red – leaving *them* – so much harder.

“Your duty is to protect the Universe. As Voltron.” Keith whispered once he stepped out

of an alarmed Red and into Space. Red itched to move towards Keith, but the former Red Paladin turned his jetpack on and floated up to the nose of Red.

“You cannot be captured because of my mistakes. We have a bond – and for that I will always be grateful.” Red whined painfully in Keith’s head and Keith hiccupped. “Don’t worry. A new Paladin will be by your side and he’ll hopefully have more sense than I ever could.” Keith placed a hand on Red’s nose, rubbing it once before drifting away from the mechanical lion.

“Please protect the others. Protect yourself and protect the Galaxy.” Keith whispered over his shoulder. He turned around, just in time to hear a heartbreaking noise emitting from Red but never once did he turn back around. Even when he heard Red launching into space and getting further and further away from Zarkon’s ship. From him.

This was for the best.

As Keith made his way closer and closer to the ship, he became more and more suspicious at the lack of weapons aimed for him. In fact, he was suspicious at the lack of activity from Zarkon’s ship. The energy from the ship drew him in – it was familiar and twisted like broken shards of glass. Keith knew this was Haggar’s magic calling to him. The same magic that made him the *monster* he was that day.

The only sign of life from the ship was when the main doors opened and Keith floated through them, before shutting tightly behind him. He landed on the floor silently, noting the lack of activity in the room. However, as his eyes adjusted to the darkness, upon removing his helmet, Keith could see two familiar figures in the room. One was smaller, hunched over and wearing a hood over their face. Their energy emitted from them in heavy waves, practically suffocating Keith.

Haggar.

The other figure was more relaxed and was even seated, much higher than Haggar on what looked like a throne. Keith felt himself swallow, momentarily ashamed of the fear inside him, upon seeing Zarkon. Zarkon was amused by this.

“It’s unusual for a *Paladin of Voltron* to willingly give himself up, but not impossible.” Zarkon’s grin was lecherous and send icy chills down Keith’s entire spine. However, he walked towards Haggar and Zarkon, noting the sadistic grin that Haggar wore.

“What brings the Galra runt into my empire?” Zarkon said calmly. Keith hesitated, stopping when he was merely a few feet away from where Haggar stood and Zarkon sat. He squared his shoulder and stood taller.

“To claim a death.”

Haggar’s grin twisted even more and Keith was sickened by her face. He ignored the dark witch in favor of looking at the amused Zarkon.

“And whose death would that be? Your own?”

“Yours.”

Haggar’s grin immediately morphed into a predatory snarl and Zarkon’s eyes darkened. The amused smirk fell from his lips and was replaced with a cruel snarl.

“What?”

“My death means *nothing* if I don’t bring you with me.” Keith replied sharply.

Zarkon waved a hand in Keith’s direction. “And what of Voltron? How do you possibly think of defeating me, if your pathetic excuse of a team couldn’t at full strength? Your arrogance is unsuited for a Galra soldier.”

“I am *not* a soldier of yours.” Keith hissed sharply, stepping closer to Zarkon. Haggar hissed warningly towards Keith and he stopped.

“You *always* were. Although, it seems not even you are able to be so little as a *foot* soldier.” Zarkon growled and Keith recoiled. “Ever since that day I saw your *worst* nightmares when you fought your own team on your ship, I always knew there was more to become of you. You just need the proper *teachings*. But it seems you still have a rebellious streak in you. From the day, that filthy mother of yours birthed you.”

“Don’t you dare talk about my mother like that!”

“She was a disgrace. A filthy Altean and your father was a traitor to his own people.” Zarkon continued darkly. “They banded together a group of rebels. Both Galran and Altean alike – I never knew *any* Alteans had survived my destruction, until your mother was captured.” Keith’s eyes burned with horror and he stepped back. “Oh yes. Once I had her, it was easy to destroy those traitors and kill them off. I personally was there for your mother’s demise – I watched her scream and beg for mercy, willing to give up her child in sparing her husband’s life.” Keith heart was beating far too quickly and painfully in his chest.

No. No. She would have never done that to me.

She did. Your mother never wanted you. She only loved your pathetic excuse for a father.

“Shut up!” Keith roared, hands clamped over his ears when Haggar began to cackle hysterically. “Shut up! It’s not true!”

“Oh but it is. That filthy traitor groveled and begged even after your father was killed. Then I had the pleasure of ripping her filthy little head from her shoulders.” Zarkon smirked when Keith’s eyes widened and his body hunched over.

It’s not true. It’s not true.

But it is, it is!

“It was a shame we could never find you. Eventually, we would have made it to Earth’s demise and found you. But thankfully you came to us earlier than expected. Imagine my surprise when I saw what the *Red Paladin* of Voltron was capable of. You were already a monster. I just helped you become what you were always *meant to be*.”

“Stop it! Stop it! You’re lying!” Keith hissed, fingers digging into his scalp and eyes blazing. Haggar’s cackling was growing louder and louder in his ears, almost painful for him to listen to.

“It’s a shame you couldn’t even do as we told you. It was simple and you didn’t even have to fight us. It would have made this whole mess much easier, but that’s nothing Haggar cannot fix.” Zarkon growled. “Your team will be defeated by your own hands, it’s no worries. I saw it from the moment you couldn’t fight back against those robots of your own teammates. You’re weak *Keith*. You always were and it will be the downfall of Voltron.”

You will be their death.

You will be their murderer.

You will be the murderer of this Universe.

It's not true.

It's not true!

IT'S NOT TRUE!

Keith roared, surprising Haggar and amusing Zarkon. His yellow eyes were blazing with new hunger and a thirst for blood and Zarkon's smirk only widened. Keith's teeth were sharper than before and his claws were spread at his sides, already ready to strike.

When Keith attacked, he leapt at Haggar rather than Zarkon, and Zarkon grinned.

Haggar was only stunned for a split second before she had disappeared in a cloud of smoke just as Keith's claws sunk into the air where she was just standing. She reappeared a few seconds later by Keith's side and he found himself consumed in a burning, terrible lightning.

His body arched from pain and his mind clouded. Through blurred vision, Keith could see Haggar's face, glowing purple from her lightning.

Your mind is weak. We've broken it once and we'll break it again. Just like that pesky soldier of yours.

Keith's eyes snapped open at the mention of Shiro, and somewhere deep in the throes of his mind he recognized the significance of Shiro. Several other faces popped alongside Shiro's and Keith found himself snarling at Haggar. Haggar's laughter was cut off abruptly when Keith's claws suddenly wrapped tightly around her neck, despite Keith still being electrocuted by Haggar.

Panicking, Haggar increased the intensity of her lightning but still Keith did not let go. Slowly, she felt the wind being knocked out of her as her neck was crushed by the force of Keith's grip. In a sudden moment of fright, Haggar shot an enormous burst of lightning from both of her hands, knocking Keith onto his back and away from her, before she disappeared. She reappeared several feet further from Keith, as Keith rolled onto his back. More out of fear than caution, Haggar created several more clones of herself.

"How dare you?" She hissed, voice sounding like nails on ice. "How *dare* you think that you can defeat me? You're nothing more than a beast, meant to be controlled by me!" She screeched as several clones launched themselves on Keith.

Keith was quick and already on his feet when the first clone attacked. His mind was getting muddier and muddier and his thoughts were becoming less coherent – *less human* really, the more he fought. A part of him was fearful of what was to come, should Keith's mind completely disappear and should he let instincts take over. He felt like less and less of his own control was happening.

Each time Keith swiped a clawed hand at a clone, it disappeared in a fit of black smoke, temporarily blinding Keith until the next clone attacked. Despite only being clones, Keith still felt the pain from lightning hitting them and pain from someone probing inside his head. He could feel Haggar's magic wrapping around him and weaving in the spaces surrounding him, like a complex web.

“You are nothing!” Haggar yelled across the room as dozens upon dozens of clones began to surround Keith. Keith fought viciously, and would have torn the clones apart if they were real aliens, but he was slowly growing overwhelmed. His fogged and tormented mind barely noticed the pile of black sludge pooling around his feet and latching onto his clothes tightly, until it was too late. “You will never be anything more than an experiment! Tested over and over until we have the perfect weapon to destroy the Galaxy. Only then will your little friends realize the *beast* you’ve become.” Haggar said darkly, eyes blazing with new found fury.

Keith snarled and thrashed in the black sludge, which was slowly dragging up Keith’s legs and weaving around Keith’s entire body. He could hardly even move his legs and his legs were slowly getting more and more painful. The more he thrashed and the more his body was consumed, the angrier Keith felt himself getting. The more animalistic he became and the less *human* he was.

Haggar cackled from where she stood away from Keith with her hands raised in his direction. She watched with sick satisfaction as her dark magic consumed the Red Paladin’s body. She could feel his anger, his power and his mind slowly falling victim to her clutches. It would only be a matter of time before the Red Paladin was completely under her control.

Unlike the last time the Red Paladin was in her control, she would not fail at making him *hers*, this time.

There would be no more Red Paladin.

No more Keith.

No more Voltron.

Keith’s heartbeat was slowly and his vision was darkening the more and more that the black sludge and Haggar’s magic consumed him. He could feel himself growing weaker by the second, even as he got angrier and hungrier for revenge. His mind was barely on the edge of sanity with the tiniest of threads and Keith knew there was only one way to stop Haggar.

He needed to lose control.

When the last of Keith’s *human* mind was pressed into the very corners of his brain, Keith felt a new thirst for blood in his body. He could feel his body vibrating with new strength and the dark magic surrounding him dimmed.

He was still consumed by the black sludge and dark magic crawling up his body, but now Keith was able to take a step forward, leaving behind a trail of magic. Haggar was stunned, say the least, at Keith’s actions and for a moment she felt nothing but fear. She directed all of her magic and power to the animal before her, fearful of the hungry look in Keith’s eyes. He shouldn’t have been able to move, let alone walk as far as he had in her trap. No one had ever been able to beat her magic, not even that human soldier.

However, Keith was walking closer and closer to Haggar with every step while Zarkon watched.

“How dare you! How dare you!” Haggar screeched, shooting lightning from her hands when Keith snarled in her direction. However, the powerful dark magic that was enveloping around Keith’s body merely absorbed the lightning into it until it disappeared. Keith continued to move towards her. She hissed viciously as he came closer and moved to vanish from his sights, only for Keith to rush at her with a sudden and unrecognizable burst of speed.

His hands, while slowly being consumed by the black sludge and dark magic, wrapped tightly around her neck and his smile was nothing but bloodthirsty and insanity. She struggled in his grip, only for Keith to pull her close to him. His crazed, bright eyes stared down hungrily at her while the black sludge began to consume his face and the rest of his body. Haggar jerked when she felt the black sludge beginning to crawl along her arms and legs, slowly consuming herself along with Keith. She felt as if her magic were not her own anymore and there was nothing but a darkness that was enveloping her and Keith, until there was nothing but black surrounding her.

The last Keith saw, even though a primal mindset, was the smile on Zarkon's face.

Then the door burst open, and Keith saw nothing more.

Lance was the first to run into the room, blaster already drawn and firing at Zarkon. He saw a malicious grin twisted on Zarkon's face, before his blaster took aim. However, his shot missed when Zarkon snarled at him and vanished right before his eyes. The hairs on the back of his neck stood up with uneasiness when Zarkon vanished, just as the others ran into the room to join him. Haggar was nowhere to be seen in the room and neither was Keith.

This was too easy.

"Keith!" Lance turned at Shiro's yell to see Shiro staring at a black mass of sludge in the middle of the room. Lance frowned, unsure of how Shiro was making the connection of Keith to this black pile of sludge. Beside him, Matt looked as if he wanted to say something to his friend but remained quiet when Allura looked at the sludge in horror.

Something wasn't right.

Before anyone could move or make a noise, there was a blinding purple light that forced everyone to turn away and squeeze their eyes shut. After, the temporary blindness, several gasps filled the room when a familiar body stood before them.

Keith.

However, Lance and the others didn't even take one step, before Keith's head rose. *No.* Two red lines were etched into Keith's purple face, from his cheekbones down to his chin. His eyes were *glowing* yellow and tufts of white hair were scattered across his head and ears. Keith's teeth were sharper than normal and his claws were longer, but what caught everyone's attention most was the insane grin on Keith's face as he stared down his family.

"*Hello Voltron.*" The voice coming from Keith sounded so wrong and so unlike his and yet at the same time it was. But really it wasn't. His voice sounded heavy and like a combination of two voices, as if Haggar was somehow speaking at the same time that he was. Shiro felt his heart drop and the entirety of Team Voltron was falling off its axis in realization. "*Welcome to your death.*"

x.x.V.x.x

I've been wandering for too long, and now I'm trapped by a monster.

Chapter End Notes

Mic drop. Boom.

That's all I gotta say guys. ONE MORE CHAPTER LEFT AND IT'S GOING TO BE FECKING AMAZING! You all, Ima spoil you with this last chapter. It's going to be fantastic and I'm a little sad but also insanely happy to see this fic finished (mostly happy so people don't have to wake 84 years for an update!!!!). And if there is enough popular demand and time in my schedule I may consider a sequel to this fic. We shall see; it's up to you guys. Mwhahaha. What's going to happen now? How will it all end?

Guys, I'm psyched. So when I say VOL you say TRON! VOL -
Thanks and peaceout!

Goddamn Right, You Should Be Scared of Me

Chapter Notes

Damn guys this is the end. I'm feeling a little lost right now. Not much to say int he beginning but I hope you're ready for ~~~AAAAANNNNNNGGGGSSSSTTT~~~~~
Enjoy!

PS - Did you all enjoy chapter 9's cliffHAGGAR?? Huh, huh, get it? (Credit goes to the brilliant mind of Anna Smith for that pun. Thanks for that)

Because I'm a nerd, this chapter is inspired by Gandalf's quote: "True courage is not knowing when to take a life, but when to spare one."

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

I've been alone all this time.

I've been alone all this time, as demons fill my head.

x.x.V.x.x

Team Voltron had thought their world was crashing in on them when they came across Red flying back towards them, unpiloted.

They had feared for the worst when Red continued back to Allura's ship alone.

They thought they were too late.

Yet, they still went on.

Still, this team (*broken as it may be*) flew on, with a plan to find their friend and bring him back home. Alive or not. For the first time, everyone was ready to fly in, if only to save their friend. Even if it meant meeting their end. For the first time, Team Voltron flew without their lions, already prepared should they fail so that the enemy wouldn't get their hands on Voltron. They were ready to sacrifice their lives just as their friend did, in order to bring him home.

Team Voltron was silent and somber as they flew the shuttle to the enemy's ship. Their princess was awaiting their return on her ship, after losing the argument to join their rescue mission.

Someone had to take their lions to safety should they fail.

Their princess was the only one who could.

She was not alone though. She had her trusted friend and advisor at her side, her four small companions too and a Commander who was ready to pilot them to safety if the time came. The Commander accepted this fate, though he was reluctant to see *both* of his children ready to leave on what could be their final mission (*especially since his son had just been freed only to go back*). But in his heart, he knew how important this meant and he'd done as much as he could to change their minds.

Besides, the Commander knew that this poor boy did not deserve his fate.

Maybe this team could save him this time.

The Commander's son stood beside Team Voltron, ready for what he thought to be his final fight. He'd become a part of this team very quickly but he was not quite a part of the Voltron family. No, that was something that only those around him had and it was something special. He wasn't jealous nor did he desperately want to be a part of this family. This was theirs and theirs alone. It was a bond they would share throughout lifetimes and all across the galaxy.

It was a bond meant only for them.

That is why he hoped and prayed to anyone who was listening that they could rescue their friend. To end the suffering and torment that he was feeling and that Team Voltron was experiencing. This team needed their friend, just as much as he had needed them.

They were prepared to fight.

They were prepared to fight the emperor and the darkness that he carried. They were ready to fight, all the way to the end, until they found where their friend was hidden. They were prepared to face off against the dark witch, whose trickery and sorcery was sure to be their downfall.

They, however, weren't prepared to face a monster.

A monster wearing Keith's face.

x.x.V.x.x

He was so cold.

So, so very cold.

Why did everything hurt when he was so cold?

His memory was foggy with only bits and pieces of pain and terrifying darkness coming to him. His vision was blurred and his hearing sounded as if cotton balls were stuffed in his ears.

He couldn't even remember what he had been doing here.

But his body was still moving.

His arms and legs were tensed as his body sensed several figures entering the room. He couldn't see who they were or what they wanted when a blinding white, hot pain took over his body.

"Hello Voltron." His lips were moving and his voice was speaking but he didn't recognize it as his own. He could hear himself and yet it wasn't completely him either. There was someone else. *Someone else controlling him.* His mind squeezed painfully as if wrapped with invisible chains. "Welcome to your Death."

"Haggard! What have you done to Keith?"

Keith's mind sluggishly comprehended the sentence. *That was his name, yes. Keith.* Slowly, Keith's vision cleared and he could begin to make out the faces of the figures in front of him. His mind was still confused and there was no recognition of the figures right away, but Keith knew (*oh, how he knew*) that someone he *knew* these figures.

From somewhere.

Again, Keith found his lips moving without his consent and his body twisted horribly. He was becoming aware that his might be his own, but his body was not. "I've done nothing to him, *Champion*. I've only made him stronger. Better. An even stronger weapon than we could have ever made *you*."

Several gasps were heard and Keith's vision cleared even more.

There was a man, in a black and white suit staring at Keith angrily. His eyes were burning with hatred and fury (*was it for him?*) and Keith could see one arm of his beginning to glow. Behind him, another man in a blue suit was pointing his gun towards the ground, but Keith could see the horror in those blue eyes.

There was another man wearing a similar suit but in yellow, with fists clenched and *tears* washing down his face (*why does he cry?*). Beside him, stood a boy? Or was it a girl? Maybe it was neither, said a small part of Keith's mind as he stared at the figure wearing a green and white suit. Their eyes were burning with tears that had yet to fall but were only seconds away from spilling. Finally, there stood a boy, who looked almost identical to the green figure, only taller. He was the only one with a weapon pointed at Keith.

Yet, Keith wasn't afraid.

"Keith, if you're in there please tell us buddy." The blue figure pleaded, catching Keith's attention. His mind was still in agonizing pain and his body was screaming in protest. As he stared at the figure, he could feel his lips curling back in a sneer and his eyes narrowing, even when he didn't want to.

"Your friend cannot hear you. He is *gone*." For some reason Keith *hated* the horrified look that the blue man gave him. Some part of him was screaming that this man was not supposed to look like that (*he shouldn't be broken*). As Keith fought for consciousness, unsure of why he felt so connected to these people he recognized a name coming to mind.

Lance.

Yes, this man's name was Lance. He is Blue.

"Keith buddy, tell me you're there!" Lance cried, taking a step towards Keith. For a split second, Keith felt his lips twitch into a soft smile, like he wanted, but it was gone as soon as it came and a new wave of pain washed over him. Keith felt his arms beginning to move without his consent and his body was tensing.

In less than a second, a burst of purple lightning was shooting out of Keith's hands, at neck-breaking speeds and hurtling towards Lance. Keith didn't know why but he could feel himself screaming for this man.

Lance's eyes widened as he ducked, barely managing to avoid being burned to a crisp. The lightning struck the wall behind him, turning it black and leaving a gaping hole. Sparks and fire flew from the wall but Keith grinned darkly.

"Your friend cannot hear you. You are only wasting your breath." Keith found himself cackling and even he knew it sounded so wrong in his ears. The yellow man flinched, shoulders shaking and eyes closed tightly.

Hunk. The name felt right.

How pathetic. These are the Defenders of the Universe?

Keith blinked at the new, unfamiliar (*but it was familiar, so, so familiar and Keith didn't even know*) that spoke in his mind. The one that was controlling his body.

What are you doing to me? Why are you hurting these people?

Be quiet and watch their demise.

Keith felt his own body running cold at the voice and if he could, he surely would be trembling with fright. He didn't quite know why yet, but the thought of killing these people brought more dread to Keith than he imagined.

"Keith." Keith felt his eyes locking on the black figure that was closest to him. He was surprised at the haunted and tormented look in the man's eyes and for a second Keith felt overwhelmed with sadness.

This man's name was Shiro. *Who was he to Keith?*

"Keith, please, I know you're in there. Fight it." Shiro pleaded, much to Keith's confusion.

This was a Defender of the Universe? Keith thought and the other voice did not answer him. Instead, Keith felt his body moving towards Shiro with newly sharpened claws. He recognized his body taking form, ready to *kill*.

Shiro hissed, eyes still full of pain, but he jumped away from Keith. Keith felt his claws dig into the ground where Shiro once was. An unfamiliar wave of anger washed through him, as he snarled and tore up the floor from the ground. Afterwards, Keith tossed the torn up floor to the side as if it were nothing.

"Keith! Stop! This isn't you and you know it! You have to fight it!" Shiro cried out again when Keith's body moved to strike again. This time, Keith heard the terrible sound of claws scraping against metal, as Keith's hands brushed against one of Shiro's arms. His heart jumped at the thought of having gotten so close to Shiro.

Shiro.

Lance.

Hunk.

Pidge.

Those were their names. They were part of a team. A team of Defenders and Pilots. A Team of Lions and Saviors. *Voltron*.

Voltron will burn, and you will be no more. The voice returned, and Keith felt his consciousness beginning to shrink back. He somehow recognized this voice and yet he had no idea who it belonged to or why they were with him.

"Fight this Keith! You must fight Haggar!" Pidge, the small one, yelled when Keith spun around to face Shiro. One of Keith's hands were already shooting out in the direction of Keith and Keith felt the familiar tingling feeling building from his chest to his arms and down to his fingertips as lightning shot from him and towards Pidge. The other one that looked like Pidge

(Matt) was quick to pull Pidge away from the path of the lightning and once again, it hit into the wall, causing an array of explosions.

The floor underneath Keith wobbled and an alarm sounded.

“Why do you think that you can save him?” Keith’s voice laughed. It sounded too dark and too disgusting to belong to him but Keith couldn’t stop it. Everything about this whole situation felt wrong, as if this wasn’t how it was supposed to be. *This wasn’t supposed to happen.* “He’s already too far gone. There is nothing left of this *Red Paladin*.”

The Red Paladin?

That was him. He was the Red Paladin.

Was.

“You’re lying.” Shiro hissed, jaw clenched tightly. He refused to believe that Keith wasn’t alive somewhere inside that body. Haggar could not have solely taken over Keith without a fight. “Keith is there, I know it!”

Keith’s cackle echoed through the room even louder than the sound of the alarm. From the corner of his eyes he could see Lance and Hunk circling behind him as Shiro remained in front. While no one took aim to shoot or hurt Keith, he knew they were planning something. It seemed that his controller felt the same way and in an instant Keith felt his entire body splitting apart and a darkness washed over his eyes as he disappeared from sight.

He suddenly reappeared and it was Lance and Hunk who were directly in front of him and not Shiro. Keith could hear the voices of everyone else crying out but it was too late. The tingling came and lightning shot out from both of Keith’s hands directly at Hunk and Lance. He was too close to them. There was no way they would have time to avoid this lightning and Keith knew it was fatal.

His heart screamed at the sight and Keith *knew* that this team meant more to him than he could remember. He felt a fire burning in his veins and his body grew hotter and hotter. Keith could feel his mind pushing against the intruder in his body and suddenly he could feel all of his limbs.

He could move his body.

Keith ignored the screaming from the other voice when his arms and legs were in his control as the fire raged on inside him. Without even thinking, Keith curled his fingers and jerked his arm across his chest. He was astounded momentarily when the lightning was redirected at the very last second, burning only the tips of Lance’s hair, towards an empty wall. The lightning exploded against the wall, raining sparks down on them.

“Keith!”

Keith only had a second before his body hunched over when the pain hit him at full force.

You vile creature! How dare you try to stop this! You are not in control; I am! The voice (Haggar) screeched at Keith and the pain only became more and more unbearable. He could feel his limbs slowly growing number as his control slipped and a new fear raced through Keith. *He didn’t want to be controlled. He didn’t want to watch anymore.*

Get out of me. Keith hissed while his body shook with pain and the strength that it took

for Keith to fight for control.

This body doesn't belong to you anymore!

"Keith!" Lance shouted again, when he saw Keith hunched over in obvious pain. He knew that he saw Keith look at him and Hunk (*it was Keith's eyes full of terror*) when he redirected the lightning. It was Keith who saved them from Haggar's lightning.

Keith was still there.

The others had seen it too. Even Matt, and it gave them hope.

"Keith! Fight her! Fight against her!" Shiro yelled when Keith shouted and swung towards him. He scowled when Keith disappeared in a cloud of black smoke once again. Keith suddenly reappeared beside Matt, but howled when Pidge's bayard hit Keith and shocked him.

"Sorry, Keith." Pidge immediately apologized but they and Matt both backed off. "That was for Haggar not you!"

Those worthless creatures, think they can really take on a witch? Haggar hissed and Keith winced. He clutched his head while feeling the electric shock from Pidge's bayard redirecting and swirling around him. It mixed with the dark magic of Haggar's lightning until it shot out at Pidge and Matt. Keith found himself sighing with relief when the two easily avoided it.

"Despicable creatures." Keith scowled with Haggar's voice. His fists clenched at his sides and his body trembled and the air was crackling with electricity. It made the hairs on everyone else stand up. Inside his body, Keith couldn't help but smile at his teammates; at the ones he had once called family.

They'll beat you. He couldn't help but think and Keith's body snarled at the thought.

"Voltron will be defeated." Haggar hissed using Keith's voice. Shiro and the others narrowed their eyes darkly at this and moved in a line together. "You will all die."

"Keith is stronger than you. He won't be defeated." Hunk yelled, voice full of anger and determination rather than fear. Even up against one of his worst nightmares, Hunk couldn't help but defend his friend.

"Do you really think that *runt* is still here?" Hunk shivered at seeing the malicious sneer on Keith's face. He had just gotten used to Keith's face in Galra form, and this twisted grin did not belong on any form of Keith. It was unnatural.

"He's there! I know it!" Lance argued, only to be held back by Shiro. He wanted to fight and scream to save Keith and shove Shiro aside, but deep down he knew they wouldn't win that way.

Keith threw his head back and his laughter echoed darkly through the destroyed room. When his eyes stared at Lance and the others, Haggar's red lines were more prominent and his eyes were glowing brighter. "You really are *naïve*. Such terrible qualities for the saviors of the Universe." The air cracked with shocks of lightning, as Team Voltron barely avoided being hit.

Shiro swallowed when he noticed other versions of Keith were popping up throughout the room. *Another trick of Haggar's.* However, unlike the last time that Haggar and Shiro fought, these clones of Keith were all different.

And terrifying.

Some were of a Galra Keith, much larger and bigger than he was. With teeth like knives and claws like swords.

There were ones that were exact copies of Keith.

Others were the Keith they had once known, but with a maniac grin and red eyes.

The worst were of Keith covered in blood.

Some of the clones had Keith staring at the Paladins, face bloody and dripping to the floor. Others were missing a limb with only a bloody stump left in place. Some of them were on the floor, guts spilling out and legs gone. Others were covered in blood, grinning wickedly at each of the paladins.

One clones in particular, closest to the Paladins, had their *human* version of Keith, face covered in blood and yellow eyes staring at them. Along his face, were slits that had been cut to his lips, to forever etch in a terrifying grin.

“Look at what you’ve done to me.” This Keith cackled, sending ice down everyone’s spine. “Look at what I’ve become because of you.”

Lance hesitated, taking a weak step backwards when a large, monstrous Galra Keith stood near him. His hands shook and his bayard lowered as he stared at the clone in horror. He knew this wasn’t Keith – this *wouldn’t* be Keith, but that still didn’t stop the fear he felt.

“This is what I’ll be. This will be the last thing you see.” The large Galra growled at Lance.

“How could you do this to me? How could you let them do this to me?” Shiro flinched when a bloody Keith, missing his legs and his torso, crawled along the floor towards Shiro. A dark, red trail of blood followed him and Shiro’s heart raced.

“Stop this! Keith, stop this now!” Shiro yelled, jumping when the wounded version of Keith grabbed his ankle with a bloody hand. He kicked the hand off, immediately jumping back with eyes wide. He instantly zeroed in on the laughing Keith that was the real one.

“This is your greatest *weakness* Champion.” Haggar cackled. Shiro was disturbed to hear such a sound coming from his friend, even looking like a Galra. “This is all your greatest weaknesses. If you’d only killed him when you had this chance, none of this would have happened.”

Shiro swallowed, vision darkening as several clones of Keith narrowed in on him.

“Such a pretty, pretty girl.” A crazed Keith clone with yellow eyes and burns all across his body cooed as he moved towards Pidge and Matt. Without even thinking, Matt put himself between this clone and Pidge, and then fired his weapon.

The clone disappeared in a flash of smoke when the laser hit him and then there was no more.

From somewhere in his own mind, Keith could only watch in horror as his friends (*his family*) was surrounded by horrifying images of him. *This wasn’t supposed to happen. They were supposed to be safe.*

They'll never be safe as long as you live. Haggar sneered and Keith whimpered. At this new sadness, he could feel himself being pushed deeper and deeper into his mind, away from consciousness.

“No!” Keith stopped at the cry. “Keith fight this! Please, I know you can do it! You *have* to fight!” Lance was shouting at Keith, despite trying to shoot and fend off a small army of clones around him. For a second, Keith was flooded with warmth and his whole body froze, causing Haggar to snarl. He turned towards Lance, seeing him push his way through several cloned Galra Keith’s, staring at *Keith* with eyes full of fear.

Lance.

Keith moved his body forward, with his own will, ignoring the force that Haggar was using to try and stop him. With slow, shaky steps, Keith began to move towards Lance. Upon seeing this, Lance’s eyes flooded with relief.

No! You will not win! Haggar hissed and Keith hunched over when a blinding pain filled his entire body. He wrapped his arms around himself in agony and squeezed his eyes shut.

However, Haggar’s trick was at a disadvantage. As she attempted to push Keith out of control, and numb his body with pain, her magic weakened as his body did. Around Keith and the Paladins, the terrifying clones of Keith were glitching in and out of appearance.

Keith could feel tears of pain building behind his eyes as he fought for control. Haggar’s magic and prescience was attempting to cloud Keith with darkness and drown him in the recesses of his mind.

“How about you: Shut your Quiznak!”

The pain numbed for a small second when the voice floated into Keith’s mind. All other sounds and surroundings were dimmed and Keith was unaware of it all except for the pain. And this voice.

The voice was soon followed by a blurred image of Lance, before their first battle on Ares, arguing with Keith.

“I don’t think you’re using that word correctly.” Dimly, Keith could see himself, but he wasn’t human in this memory as he once was. Instead, Keith could see himself in his Galra form arguing with Lance as if nothing had happened.

Keith could barely think and question it when a new wave a pain rolled over him.

“It’s good to have you back.” Once again, Keith recognized his own voice and blurrily saw himself (again as a Galra) standing beside Shiro back on Earth, and clapping a hand on his shoulder. He watched as Shiro turned to him with a soft smile.

“It’s good to be back.”

Slowly, Keith began to realize that the pain was receding and his mind was starting to clear. He could still feel the overwhelming presence of Haggar and knew she was still trying to drown him in darkness. However, at the same time Keith could feel a new light burning in his chest.

“I’m sorry I tried to leave Voltron.” A new image, this one of Pidge and himself sitting outside of the castle on Ares at night, appeared before Keith. *“I didn’t mean to make you guys*

upset.”

“I know you miss your family.” Keith heard himself admit. “I know what it’s like to miss someone. I’m sorry we haven’t found them yet.”

“Guess we’re a bunch of sad, sorry space kids, aren’t we?” Pidge laughed, easing with comfort next to the Galra Keith. The light burned with more intensity in his chest.

“Nah. Maybe just a little lost and confused.” Keith chuckled. Outside of the memory, Keith felt almost no pain by now and the darkness was beginning to fade. He could hear the sounds of everyone around him, still fighting desperately to save Keith.

To save their family.

“Hunk, calm down, and yes lasers.” A new memory of Keith and Hunk came forwards as tears built in his eyes.

“Hey mullet-head. I bet my lion’s faster than yours!”

“Bring it on!”

“Keith, do you ever think about why we’re here?”

“You mean, why are we in giant lions, fighting an evil frog-lord in space?”

“...I’m telling everyone you made a joke.”

“Pidge. No.”

“Seriously, you’d think that in the vastness that is space, we’d find at least one plant made of nachos.”

“I think that’s impossible Hunk.”

“We’re in a giant robot that had cat heads for hands.”

“...Good point.”

“More space goo?”

“Yeah.”

“Shiro, do you ever think about what happened to you?”

“Sometimes. It’s kinda not hard to think about, when you’re sitting in bed in an empty darkness in space.”

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Shiro.”

“No. I’m probably not, Keith.”

“You will be. Someday, as long as we stick together.”

“Thanks Keith...”

“The fuck, did you do to my hair?!”

“Now, now, Keith, you have to admit that pink really is your color.”

“I thought it was supposed to be Red, Lance.”

“Pidge! Not helping. Keith, buddy, now hey, you might want to put down your knife. Buddy. Pal. Brother. Keith? Keith! KEITH NO!”

“We’re a team now and we’re in this together.”

Keith blinked when he realized that he could see. He was no longer covered by darkness and feeling as if he were downing. Haggar’s magic and presence was no longer in control and Keith was free to *all* of his senses. He realized that he was kneeling on the floor, with arms wrapped around his body, but his friends were still fighting against the clones from Haggar.

Keith stumbled to his feet and in an instant all of the clones vanished in a dark smoke and the room was empty. Around him, the Paladins and Matt were frozen in confusion, in position to fight. Upon seeing the clones gone, they turned their attention to *their* Keith, who was standing on shaky legs.

“Keith!” They all cried at once and everyone was racing to grab their friend before he could fall on weak legs. Shiro and Hunk held him up before Keith could face plant to the floor and Pidge and Lance were kneeling by his side.

“Keith, you goddamn idiot! What were you thinking?!” Lance couldn’t help but hysterically shout and slapped Keith across the back of the head. He ignored everyone’s disappointed looks.

No one noticed the red lines still on Keith’s face.

“What?” Keith blinked tiredly at lance, who was beyond relieved to see Keith’s familiar purple eyes looking back at him, rather than Haggar’s yellow ones. He couldn’t stop the smile on his face and before anyone could move, Lance practically threw himself on top of Keith, surprising Keith. He barely managed to keep himself upright, thanks to Shiro and Hunk’s help.

“We knew you could do it! That was amazing!” Lance said once he pulled back, face red with a heavy blush. Keith was sure if he could he would have been blushing just as hard in that moment. Glancing around, he noticed the smiles sent his way from everyone, including Pidge’s brother.

Noticing Keith’s look, Matt smiled. “Hi, I’m Matt. I’m Pidge’s older brother and I was on the Kerberos mission with Shiro.” Matt waved while Keith blinked in confusion.

“Um, Keith. I tried to kill you.” Everyone besides Matt winced at the comment.

“Yeah. I remember. But no hard feelings. I understand now.” Matt shrugged and Keith only gawked.

“Er, thanks?” Keith managed after a few seconds and Matt laughed. Embarrassed he turned his attention to the others and felt his body sink in guilt.

“You guys shouldn’t be here. It’s not safe.” He started only to be interrupted by Pidge.

“Oh my god, this again? Don’t even start.” They sighed, pushing against Keith.

“Keith, we’re sorry.” This time, Keith’s mouth did drop open as he turned to stare at Shiro. Shiro’s eyes were pained and unwavering even when Keith met his gaze. It made Keith a little uneasy and he almost squirmed.

“We should have realized how much we were hurting you. We’re sorry we made you feel like you weren’t a part of this family, since you became a Galra.” Shiro sighed sadly. Keith swallowed thickly but found that he was unable to speak. “Keith, I don’t care if you’re a Galra, an Altean or some other space alien. You’re still Keith. You’re still the little brother that came to my house when he was a little boy and who built stupid pillow forts with me, and kicked all of the upperclassmen’s asses. You’re still the Red Paladin – Red *knew* who and what you were and it still chose you. You’re still a part of Voltron. You’re still a part of this team and of this family. You’re still Keith and *nothing* can ever change that.”

Keith found himself unable to speak and knew he was only seconds away from *another* breakdown.

“But – but I hurt you guys.”

“That doesn’t matter. Keith you’re not dangerous. You’re in trouble because of Zarkon and Haggar and we left you to fend for yourselves.” Hunk interjected softly. Before Keith could comment, his eyes widened in realization and he scrambled away from the group. Everyone jumped at Keith’s spazzed movement and attempted to go near him but Keith held his hands up.

“Haggar’s still here. I can feel her! She’s not come, you can’t be near me!” Keith realized with panic. He could feel the beginnings of tears beginning to leak from his eyes and down his cheeks. Shiro’s heart, along with everyone else’s broke at the sight.

“Keith, you fought her. We can fight her together.” Lance tried.

“You don’t get it!” Keith snapped hysterically. “She’s *too* powerful. I can’t stop it! I don’t know when she could take over!”

“Keith...”

“No! Shiro, you know she’s too dangerous. You can’t bring me back as long as she’s still alive!” Keith pleaded hoarsely and Shiro swallowed. A fresh wave of tears were building in Shiro’s own eyes. “You saw what she was capable of – with me! We can’t bring her right to where the lions are. That’s what Zarkon wants!” The air buzzed with electricity and the room darkened a bit.

“Keith. Then, what do you want us to do?” Shiro didn’t want to know the answer.

No one did.

For a moment, Keith was silent as his shoulders shook with silent sobs. “You have to leave me here.” The silence that followed was even more painful.

“No, we – we have to find another way!” Pidge swallowed painfully, gripping Matt’s arm tightly. Even Matt’s eyes were wide with realization.

“There isn’t Pidge. Haggar will *never* stop trying to take control until she wins. Until Voltron is in Zarkon’s hands.” Keith croaked, causing Pidge to hiss.

“No! We’ll find a way to stop here!”

“Pidge...”

“Pidge is right! We can’t stop now! We – we just got you back!” Lance cried, stepping towards Keith and Keith’s shoulders slumped.

“It’s too dangerous Lance. This isn’t about me hurting you anymore. This is about giving Haggar Voltron.” Keith whispered with his eyes still downcast. He couldn’t bear to see the pain and torment on his friends’ faces. It was better this way.

“How do you know she’s still here? What if you defeated her?” Hunk nervously asked and Keith choked back another sob.

“She can only be stopped if she’s dead.” *If I’m dead.*

The unspoken words hung heavy in the air and everyone’s bodies felt as if they were made of ice. Shiro was horrified with realization and despite having Keith already *begging* him for death, he still couldn’t believe the thought. Lance wanted to kick and scream; he wanted to pound his fists against the ground at how *unfair* this all was. How unfair it was that they were the Universe’s last hope. How they all had to hurt and suffer. How Keith had to hurt the most. How Keith *continued* to have to suffer.

It wasn’t fair.

Pidge and Matt were both ashamed to admit the thought to be true. They were the two most logical members of the group and knew with reason that Keith’s suggestion was the best solution. However, while both were heavy logical thinkers, they both also had hearts the size of the moon.

Hunk’s heart, that was much too big for him, was breaking and cracking at the pain he felt and the pain that Keith must feel. Like the others he was in heavy denial of killing Keith as an answer.

“No.” Shiro whispered, feeling his own tears falling alongside Keith’s. “No, Keith there has to be another way.” *He couldn’t do this. He couldn’t do this.*

“You, FOOLS!” Keith’s voice combined suddenly with Haggar’s and in a second his eyes were bright yellow and his hair was whitening. Haggar used Keith’s pain and agony to overpower him, during his vulnerability and cloud his mind with darkness. Keith was easily overpowered and shoved back from consciousness without a fight. His body and mind were in too much pain to comprehend the situation. “This is why you are *weak*! He gave you every chance to stop us – to kill *me*! And you refused it!”

Shiro and the others cried out when black sludge shot out from under Keith’s feet. The sludge sparked with painful lightning as they wrapped around each member of the team and they

rose into the air. The Paladins squirmed and fought against the hold, but this only tightened the hold on each of them even more painfully.

“You could have ended it right here. He was willing to be a sacrifice for the greater good!” Haggar whispered through Keith’s mouth. Keith’s face morphed into a sickening grin and his hair turned whiter and whiter by the second.

“No! No! Keith!” Shiro yelled desperately. He groaned when the sludge wrapped around every inch of his body and raised him even higher into the air. Wildly looking around, Shiro saw the others in the same position as him and his heart sunk at the thought. Guilt pooled into his gut and his stomach churned.

He had failed as their leader. He had brought them into harms, and now they were going to pay with their lives for his failure.

“This is why humans are so *weak*. They care too much and it blinds them of what needs to be done.” Haggar hissed, curling Keith’s fingers into fists. The black sludge around everyone slowly began to wrap itself around their heads and faces, and everyone squirmed with panic.

“Stop! Keith, stop her!” Hunk cried out as the sludge came over his forehead.

“Leave him alone! Leave Keith alone!” Lance shouted, only to be silence as the sludge wrapped itself around his mouth.

“Lance!” Shiro yelled, fighting furiously against the sludge holding him. “Hunk! Matt! Pidge!” Shiro watched in horror as each of his teammates – his family was swallowed up completely by Haggar’s dark magic. His eyes burned with tears and his throat clenched painfully at the sight. *He had failed.*

He had failed the Universe.

He had failed Earth.

He had failed Voltron.

He had failed his family.

Lance.

Hunk.

Pidge.

Allura.

Coran.

Matt.

Commander.

Keith.

As the black sludge slowly began to form around Shiro’s face and covering his mouth, his nose and soon his eyes, he dimly saw Keith’s body staring at him with Haggar’s eyes and the last of Shiro’s will was swallowed up by the sludge.

“I’m sorry...Keith.”

x.x.V.x.x

It was dark where Keith was.

He didn’t know exactly where he was.

There was nothing but emptiness.

“Hello?” Keith called out hesitantly. No answer followed and Keith swallowed thickly. He continued to walk in this emptiness, fearing that Haggar had *locked* him somewhere in his mind. Somewhere that Keith could never escape. Like a prison.

“Hello?” Keith tried again. This time, his voice echoed through the emptiness, bouncing back to him several times. Nervously, Keith wrung his hands together out of worry for his teammates.

“Shiro? Hunk? Pidge? Lance?” Keith called out again, only to receive no answer. “Is – Is anyone here?”

He was alone.

Keith’s greatest fear and worst nightmare, and he was experiencing it tenfold right now.

Just as Keith was about to give up and cry into his arms for all the pain and loneliness he had ever felt, he stopped when two figures appeared before him.

“Keith.”

Keith’s eyes welled with tears as he furiously fought against them, but it was a losing battle when the parents he had never gotten to know were standing before him. He almost stumbled until his mother and father shot out to grab him.

“Mom? Dad?”

“Oh Keith.” Keith’s mother sighed sadly, before throwing her arms around Keith. Keith was stunned, unable to move until his father joined them and pulled him and his mother into another hug. Only then, did Keith finally hold on desperately to someone who *loved* him and cried.

He cried for his loneliness he had felt since he was a child.

He cried for all those bullies that hurt him.

He cried for all the nights he wished to remember his parents.

He cried for when Shiro was declared dead and the year he spent alone.

He cried for all the torture that Zarkon had put him through.

He cried for all the pain his team had felt.

Keith had finally cried.

“Oh, my little sunshine.” Keith’s mother whispered, pulling back in order to wipe under Keith’s eyes while he hiccupped loudly. He wasn’t exactly sure whether or not any of this was real

but right now, none of that mattered. “Look at how much you’ve grown.” His mother said softly and twirled a strand of Keith’s purple hair.

“Mom. Dad.” Keith buried his face into his father’s shirt and leaned into his mother’s touch. The touch felt so familiar and so right, despite all odds.

“Hey there Keith.” Keith’s father said hoarsely.

“How did you know it was me?” Keith couldn’t help but ask tiredly, after a while of sitting in his parents embrace. His tears hadn’t dried yet but at least he didn’t feel like he was going to start bawling any time soon. Keith’s father’s expression turned into a pained look while his mother swallowed.

“A parent always recognizes their baby. Even if they look a little different.” Keith’s mother smiled softly, making Keith’s heart twinge.

“Besides, your hair’s still an atrocious mess as it always was.” Keith’s father laughed and ironically enough Keith found himself laughing along with him. His mother rolled her eyes fondly at the two but she refrained from smacking her husband in favor of pleasing her son.

“Is this even real? Are you real?” Keith asked timidly, not wanting to ask the real question on mind. *Is this another one of Haggar’s tricks?* Keith didn’t think that he could handle any more tricks, pain or heartbreak.

“As real as you make it.” Keith’s mother said, still stroking her son’s face. Her purple eyes stared at Keith with such love and warmth that Keith wanted to cry all over again. “But I promise you that this is no trick of Haggar’s. She cannot reach us, no matter how hard she tries.”

“Then how? Am I dead?” Keith felt both of his parents tighten their grips on him at this question.

“No. You’re not. Just...lost.” Keith’s father admitted. “Haggar is strong, and she has taken control, but not all of it.” He explained while Keith fell silent. He embraced the feeling of love coming from his parents and wished that he never had to leave their arms.

“Is this it then?”

“I don’t know.” Keith’s mother whispered. Keith remained quiet, snuggled deep in his mother’s embrace.

“Why did you leave me?” Keith asked the one question that had been burning on his mind, ever since he began to regain memories of his parents. All throughout his childhood, Keith had *wished* to feel what it was like to have parents. He wondered what had made his parents give him up at such a young age. Did they die? Did they not want him? Children always wanted a family, a place to call home and all his life, Keith *wished* for someone.

Keith watched his parents exchange a look and a long, suffering sigh.

“Please understand, sunshine, we *never* wanted to leave you behind.” Keith’s mother began. Keith wanted to argue and talk back with his mother’s explanation but that probably wouldn’t get anywhere but circles. Instead, he frowned.

“Keith, what you must understand is this war with Zarkon began long before you were born.” Keith’s father added quietly. His heart clenched at the painful look on his son’s face. “Zarkon had believed that he destroyed *all* Alteans and had all Galran on his side. What he didn’t

know what that a large number of Altean, women, children and even some men had escaped to a far side of the Universe. Out of Zarkon's sight. And with them were many Galran who opposed Zarkon's belief."

"Galra?"

"Not every Galra was on Zarkon's side." Keith's father smiled bitterly. "Zarkon's empire does not represent the Galra race as a whole. Even now, there are many rebellious Galran who oppose Zarkon. It's why Zarkon can be so paranoid sometimes; he *knows* of how his own "people" rebelled." Keith's father continued while Keith swallowed. "Your mother and I were part of our own small group of *generations* of Galran and Alteans, many of which had come together and had children. We lived close to Earth, on the opposite end of where Zarkon was located."

"There were hundreds of us." Keith's mother smiled softly at the memory. "It's where I met your father. He was a cocky little soldier, protecting our borders."

"Like you were any better. If I recall, the first day we met, you bet me that you could fly through and asteroid belt in your lion." Keith's father rolled his eyes, causing Keith to clamp a hand over his mouth in order to hide his laughter. His mother pretended not to notice and scowled at her husband.

"Anyway, your father and I eventually fell in love. Then years later, we had you. The most precious gift I could have ever asked for." Keith's mother's tone grew gentler as she gazed down at the child she hadn't seen in years. "But Zarkon was getting closer with every year. It was only a matter of time before he would find us; find you." Keith's mother choked on the last part of her words and his father wrapped an arm around her tightly.

"So your father and I fled, as many others did. We were the first to land on Earth – a planet we had never even heard of before." Keith's mother said after a shaky breath. "There we were, on a strange and foreign planet with nothing but a ship and the clothes on our backs and little you."

"You were the greatest thing that ever happened to us." Keith's father continued easily. "Though you were a bit fluffier and less purple back then." He chuckled while ruffling Keith hair, to which Keith responded with a huff. "But we loved you. To the moon and back, did we love you. We always did."

"Then what happened?" Keith asked.

Keith's parent's eyes saddened. "You were about four years old in Earth terms. You were just beginning to display shifting abilities, like your mother. She was blending herself and you into human society easily, while I stayed back to repair ships and listen for any alien feed. One day I heard a distress call saying that Zarkon had located a pod of our former refugees. Several of which your mother and I knew well. I wanted to go out and rescue them *desperately*." Keith's stomach twisted at the idea that his father had left him for someone else. "But I had you and your mother to think about now. I couldn't leave you. Not...not unless you were in danger."

"Zarkon was coming and he knew that some Alteans and rebellious Galran were still alive. It was only a matter of time before he found Earth and us." Keith's father's eyes darkened at the memory and his hands clenched into fist. Unconsciously, Keith found himself placing a soft hand on his father's. His father looked down at him with a surprised smile. "I left in order to keep Zarkon and his goons away from Earth. I said my goodbyes to you and your mother, not knowing if I was ever coming home. It's the biggest regret I ever have – leaving you too – but even now I wouldn't change my mind. I took your mother's lion and flew as far away from Earth as I could until Zarkon found me years later."

Keith's father was quiet, leaving his mother to continue. "For a year it was just you and I and it was the hardest year of my life, not knowing if your father was dead or alive. But *you* made it worth living Keith. But when I heard a similar distress call, warning me that your father had been captured and that Zarkon was looking for *me*, I couldn't lead him to my baby." Keith's mother caressed the side of Keith's cheek with a soft look in her eyes.

"I left you in what humans called, an orphanage, praying that someone would take you in." His mother whispered. "I modified your body to keep you in your shifting stasis to resemble a human. It wasn't supposed to ever alter unless you willed it or a heavy altercation occurred to your body." Keith's mother looked tormented at the thought as she gazed at his skin. "Zarkon did more damage than I could have ever thought, mutating your blood in the way he did, but it seems he did not get rid of all of it." She smiled as she rubbed a thumb across both of Keith's ears. Keith felt his ears twitch out of sensitivity as she did this, but it was a good sensitivity. "Your Altean markings are still where they always were." Keith's eyes locked in on the green marking on his mother's face.

"But why aren't they on my face?"

"Your Galra DNA messed up a few features. Like pointed ears." Keith's father explained. "But your markings were always there, just on your ears rather than your face. I must admit they were much easier to hide, especially if one of Zarkon's enemies had ever found you."

"Keith, I'm so sorry that you were alone for so long. Oh, if I had known the life you would have lived with our departure." Keith's mother's purple eyes soon welled up with tears and the sight made Keith frowned. His mother did not look good with tears in his eyes; in fact, Keith *hated* to see his mother cry. "I'm so sorry sunshine."

"You...you couldn't have known." Keith tried to soothe his mother as she had.

"But you were so alone!"

"You were protecting me. That's enough proof of how much you loved me." Keith admitted quietly. "I wish we could have lived together – as a real family. I wish we could have gotten to know each other, but you helped me with one question that's plagued my mind. I know you both *loved* me. Enough, to risk your lives to save me."

"Good lot that did." Keith's father bitterly said and Keith snorted. *Guess that's where he got his attitude from.*

"Well, fate had a stupid way of messing up plans." Keith rolled his eyes with a grin. "Besides, I managed to actually find a family after so long." Keith's eyes widened and his entire body went rigid in realization as the memories from earlier came rushing back.

"Shiro! Lance, Pidge! Hunk! Allura!" Keith suddenly cried, shooting to his feet. He turned in circles, seeing nothing but an empty darkness surrounding him for miles. He couldn't see his team. He couldn't hear them. He couldn't *feel* them.

"Oh no. Oh god, she killed them! She killed them all!" Keith's breath quickened and his heart raced inside his chest when his parents stood up beside them. They both tried to place comforting hands on Keith, only to be pushed away in a blind panic.

"Keith. Keith."

"She killed them and it's all my fault! Oh, they died for *nothing!*" Keith cried brokenly.

“Keith.”

“Shiro! Lance! Pidge! Hunk!”

“*Keith.*”

“Shiro! Lance! Pidge! Hunk! Allura!”

“Keith!” Keith felt his body spin around as his father gripped both of his shoulders tightly. He did not let go, even as Keith’s mother placed her hands on Keith’s cheeks and looked up at him.

“Keith, listen to me. There is still time for your friends. She hasn’t killed them yet.” Keith’s heart jumped into his throat as a light flooded his eyes. “She’s close but they’re not dead. There is still time for you to take control.”

“But she’s too strong!” Keith argued only for his parents to shake their head.

“She’s not *nearly* strong enough. Keith, you can beat her.” Keith’s mother said firmly. “You can still save your family.” As she spoke, Keith felt the familiar burning light beginning to build its way in his chest. Slowly, the dark walls around Keith shook and began to fade away and his parents smiled. “You are strong Keith. Your team is not *weak.*”

“How? They couldn’t stop me when that’s what they should have done.” Keith whispered.

“Because they loved you too much.” Keith’s mother explained. Keith was frozen; heart beating erratically and cheeks tingling. The light around his little family was carefully engulfing every inch of the darkness and Keith could feel his consciousness coming closer and closer.

“They loved me. That’s – that’s why they couldn’t do it.” Keith said and his parents nodded. “They’re not weak because they couldn’t kill me. That – that doesn’t make them *weak.* They loved me.”

“And you loved them. There is *nothing* weak about caring for someone, and wanting to save them instead of killing them.” Keith’s mother continued with a bright smile.

The light grew brighter.

“That is something that Haggar will never have.” Keith’s father added with a smile of his own. By now, Keith could see the empty room of which he had fought Haggar in. He could feel Haggar still manipulating his body as he cackled. Behind Keith’s parents, Keith saw five forms covered in dark magic and sludge and his heart stopped.

His family.

“Save them. I know you can do this.”

“What about you guys?” Keith called when the light increased. He could see the images of his parents beginning to fade and fear raced through Keith’s veins. “Are you dead?!”

Before either could answer, Keith was completely engulfed in a white light and the darkness was no more.

Keith was aware of a small amount of pain.

However, he was *aware*.

Keith blinked in realization when he could see. Hear. Smell. Taste. An overwhelming emotion of achievement and happiness rushed through Keith when he couldn't feel an inch of Haggar controlling him and Keith wanted to fall over in relaxation. Though, right now he couldn't.

Keith looked over at the black masses of sludge suspended in the air and his chest constricted at the sight of his friends still trapped, nearing death. Without thinking, Keith swiped his hands and slowly the sludge began to recede off the faces of his family. Keith's shoulders slumped in relief when his family's faces were revealed and each of them took a deep breath. The sludge was slowly receding off his family as they breathed in deeply, but it wasn't fast enough for Keith's liking.

He knew he was only getting lucky with Haggar's magic and there was no way he could *actually* control it. No one could besides Haggar.

"Keith?" Lance croaked, wincing when he saw Keith standing in front of them. He could feel the disgusting black sludge peeling off his buddy and Lance almost cried at seeing his friend's familiar face, even if it was still purple and furry.

"Lance." Keith smiled softly and looked around at the others.

There was only one way to stop Haggar. Keith knew that much.

His arm dropped to his side, and slowly his bayard appeared in his hand.

"Keith, thank god you're okay." Pidge commented with a weak smile. They quickly looked over to see their brother breathing and looking right at them. Keith smiled at the sight.

"Keith. Thank you." Shiro said softly before eyeing the bayard in Keith's hand. Shiro's eyes narrowed, but he was still stuck in the black sludge around him.

"It's going to be okay guys." Keith said oddly. The others frowned at Keith, eyes widening only when Keith's bayard transformed into his sword. "I know how to stop this." He could feel Haggar beginning to fight against his control out of desperation. She knew what was coming.

Everyone did.

"Keith, no. You don't have to do this." Matt began.

"Please, stop. Don't do this Keith." Pidge cried out, fighting against the hold on them.

"It's okay. I'm alright now." Keith continued as tears began to blur his vision (*He was crying a lot lately, wasn't he?*). His sword shook in his grip. "I know what has to be done."

"Keith, no. You don't have to do this. I'm sorry." Lance was *crying*. Everyone was *crying*.

"Please don't cry Lance. You look stupid." Keith sniffed, raising the sword higher. He heard his families desperate pleas for him to stop but Keith knew this couldn't go on. He couldn't let Haggar go on like this.

“Keith, no, don’t do this. Don’t do this!” Shiro fought furiously against the hold on him. Keith was amazed at his strength – it almost looked like he would be able to break free. He’d never seen Shiro so determined. Upon seeing the tear tracks on Shiro’s face, Keith’s smile softened.

“I’m sorry Shiro. I hope you understand.” Keith whispered, heart cracking with every cry. He raised his sword up to his chest with trembling hands and his families screams grew later.

Then Keith felt nothing but a white hot pain.

There was the sound of screams filling his ears.

And a wall come crashing down.

But Keith felt none of that as the sword pierced through his chest and he fell into oblivion.

“Keith! No, please no!”

“Keith!”

x.x.V.x.x

Keith was falling.

Was this how space felt?

Empty and dark.

He was falling and falling.

Into nothingness.

x.x.V.x.x

The Universe tore apart the day a Paladin died.

Stars and planets cried for the loss of their savior.

All across the galaxy a heaviness washed over aliens alike.

The Universe mourned its loss.

x.x.V.x.x

The first time Keith opened his eyes he was met with darkness.

The next time he opened his eyes, he saw his own reflection in a glass (*still Galra*) and the bodies of figures beside him.

The third time that Keith opened his eyes, he was met with the relieved and smiling faces of his family looking down at him. Keith took his first breath in a while, his hair no longer white and his eyes purple instead of yellow.

They told him how Haggar’s magic had left him the minute he *died*. They told him how their leader, their captain had been the first to reach his body and cauterize the wound with the

hand he always viewed as a weapon. They told Keith how their smartest member of the family and their brother made a blood transfusion out of materials available on them, and how their kindest member was the first to offer his own blood to save him. They told him of how Red came bursting into the ship, snatching them up and away from Zarkon, at speeds that no one knew possible. They told him of how Red's energy flowed through Keith, drifting him in and out of consciousness, while the bravest member of their family held his hand tightly and prayed. They told him of how their princess put him into a healing pod and worked day and night to bring Keith back from death's door. They told them of how they waited and waited for any sign of life, before Keith had opened his eyes.

Only then did everyone finally cry.

He was carefully engulfed in a hug by each member of his family – Shiro, Lance, Hunk, Pidge, Allura, Coran and even Matt and his father – before everyone held onto him tightly.

For the first time in a long time, Keith wasn't scared anymore.

He was home.

x.x.V.x.x

I've been alone all this time, until I opened my eyes and then, I saw you.

Chapter End Notes

What a ride guys. I can't believe this fic is over and this project is done. After like months of working on this and such support from you guys, I'm just blown away. I never, ever expected the response that I got from this fic when I posted that first chapter a while ago. I didn't think anyone would really like it, but gosh you guys just blew me away with your response and your comments. Each and every one made me laugh or smile, or made my day. Seriously, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Without you guys, who knows where this fic would have ended up and it means a lot to me that so many people took time out of their lives to be a part of this journey and join me with this fic. Some of you were here from the beginning (my little oldies) and some of you just started towards the end, but I appreciate each and every one of you. Thank you so much for the support of this fic!

It's honestly been my favorite one to write and I hope I didn't kill any of you or wound your souls too much with the angst I wrote. I should have warned you that, that is my specialty. But you all sure caught on quick. Thank too to my quiet little readers who gave kudos, subscriptions and bookmarks to my fic because you are just as important! If I had room and time I would seriously thank each and every one of you, but I can do that in comments ;).

So, I guess it for this fic. Sad. I feel so bitter now, but relieved (now people don't have to wait 12 years for an update). HOWEVER, I am willing to do a sequel if anyone maybe wants it? Depends on what you guys think. I've got a loose somewhat plot for a sequel but it's not all planned out (if anyone has ideas my ears are open to hear...) and it will take longer to write than this fic since I am in school and have to work a lot now. But I loved this fic, I love you guys and I'd be more than willing to write one if wanted.

If not, I also would love to keep writing for Voltron and doing prompts or oneshots

too! If you have anything you want written, just let me know and I'll write a oneshot. You can also find me on tumblr, so we can cry about season 2 of Voltron, discuss HCs or just talk, @lordofthebigtimesupernatural. Some of you have already found me and I am so happy! Even though we're at the end, I still would love to hear any thoughts or comments overall about this fic, whether you'd want a sequel or to just scream and maybe cry.

Well, here's cheers to the end of this fic. Thank you everyone. It's been quite the journey and I'm glad to have spent it with you. Thanks and lot's of love for my son Keith.

@lordofthebigtimesupernatural

End Notes

Yay! My first contribution to the Voltron fandom. I think I've probably cried after I binge watched the entire 1st season in one day and realized there was no more. I've been sketching and trying to draw these guys a lot! They've given me so much motivation.

This fic will eventually be loosely based off a post about Keith that @klanced & @ehlihr made up, with some of my own thoughts and twists thrown around. I'm not sure how long it'll be but it'd be nice to make a good lengthy fic for you guys (why I'm starting this when I have summer classes and 2 jobs, I'll never understand T_T). Don't expect every single chapter to be this long, over 8,000 words! But you never know maybe some will be longer! So what did you guys think? I always love and appreciate your comments, kudos and thoughts!

Also, a couple of side notes I should add: Pidge uses them/their pronouns. I'm not sure what I believe them to be other than I don't believe they wish to only be referred to as her/she or he/him. So they came up with they/them pronouns and the Voltron team are very serious about using them! Also Shiro has PTSD and it will come up constantly (the show uses explores this very nicely). Finally, I really doubt I would do any pairings or shipping for this story as I really just want to focus on the team/family bonding, especially around Keith since he was orphaned and lived in a desert! Also the title of this fic was inspired by the song Control by Halsey (really helped me to write this chapter heh).

Also let's pretend that they never went through the corrupted wormhole in episode 11 and it was fine and they're just on the run. There's a whole other set of plot points for that but I don't want to go into it haha ^_^

Thanks and peaceout!

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